

PAPERS ON THE BIBLE

FOR

EDUCATED MEN IN INDIA.

EDITED BY

K S MACDONALD, M A ,

FELLOW OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY,

SECOND EDITION.—4th thousand.

“ Prove all things hold fast that which is good ”

CALCUTTA

PUBLISHED FOR THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
AT 23, CHOWRINGHEE ROAD

1890

CALCUTTA

PRINTED BY TRAILL AND CO , ADVERTISER PRESS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- I The Adaptation of Bible Religion to the Needs and Nature of Man By Prof. W G Blaikie, D D, LL D
- II The Claim of Christ on the Conscience By William Stevenson, M A
- III The Great Power By F R Wynne, M A
- IV The Miracles of Jesus By the Editor
- V Insufficiency of Mere Theism By the Editor
- VI The Sixty-Six Books and the One Book By John Munro Gibson, D D
- VII What Jesus said of God and Man, Sin and Salvation By the Editor
- VIII What Jesus said of the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness By the Editor
- IX The Bible Relation to History and Geography By D W Faunce, D D
- X Revelation By H Whitehead, M A
- XI Lord Lyttleton on St Paul By George John Gritton
- XII One God and One Mediator By George Sexton, M A., LL D
- XIII The Inspiration of the Bible By the Editor
- XIV The Claims of Jesus as stated by Himself By the Editor
- XV The Self-Revelation of God in Christ By Prof Samuel Harris, D D, LL D
- XVI The National Fruits of Christianity. By R S Stairs, D D, LL D

LORD BACON'S STUDENTS' PRAYER.

O God, we humbly and earnestly beg that human things may not prejudice such as are divine, neither that, from the unlocking from the gates of sense, and the kindling of greater natural light, anything of incredulity, or intellectual night, may arise in our minds towards divine mysteries. But rather that, by our mind, thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and vanities, and yet subject and perfectly given up to the divine oracles, there may be given unto faith the things that are faith's. AMEN

INTRODUCTION.

This volume is chiefly intended for presentation to the graduates of the Indian Universities, with the view not only of directing their thoughts to Christian truth and to the solid basis on which it rests, but also of directing such of them as are disposed to pursue these studies, to granaries in which much more of the same kind is stored

All the Papers, excepting Papers III, V to VIII and XIII, have been appointed as one of the text-books for the examination in the Evidences of Christianity for the M A degree of the Calcutta University In this second edition the Papers so appointed have been left as they appeared in the first edition The order has remained as it was for the same reason But other Papers have been inserted in the place of omitted Papers All the new Papers are by the Editor himself

The first two Papers are taken from that store-house of Christian truth known as *Present Day Tracts*, of which as many as ten volumes have already been published by the R T S within the last six or seven years Some of the most learned and talented men of the present day have contributed to the series

Mr Wynne's little book entitled *Plain Proofs of the Great Facts of Christianity*, and Dr Gibson's *Rock versus Sand*,* are characterised by great simplicity and much power To Messrs Hodder and Stoughton I am indebted for Dr Sexton's *Theistic Problems* and Mr Wynne's *Plain Proofs* The learned Dr Sexton is a distinguished scientist and controversialist His lectures are able and convincing "Lord Lyttleton on St Paul" is one of the many useful lectures published by the *Christian Evidence Society*, whose volumes may also be got through Messrs Hodder and Stoughton Dr Faunce and Dr Harris are both Americans The former's *Young Man's Difficulties with his Bible* is a

* Published by Messrs, James Nisbet & Co, London Its price is only 1s. 6d.

useful publication, but more suitable for Christians than for non-Christians. It is published by Messrs Sheldon and Co., New York. Drs Harris and Storrs are the last, but by no means the least of our contributors. The former's *Self-Revelation of God* and *Philosophical Basis of Theism* are massive and thoughtful books of great value, well deserving the *Spectator's* commendation of the latter—"The length of the book represents an amount of solid thought quite commensurate with the number of its pages." They are published by Messrs T and T Clark, who are so widely known for their Continental and other theological libraries. Of Dr Storrs, I have written in a prefatory note to the paper taken from his learned work, *The Divine Origin of Christianity*. All these books, of which specimens will be found in the following pages, I heartily commend.

But to most minds the really satisfactory proof of the divine origin of Christianity is the "*tasting and seeing that the Lord is good*" (Ps cxxxiv 8), the "willing to do God's will," and as a consequence of this "knowing," by the work of the Spirit of God upon our own souls, that "the teaching is of God" (John vii 17.) "Only by trying it, do men find with that subtle and exquisite adaptation, the an is fitted to the lungs, so that by inhaling it their life is reinforced. Only by joyful experience of it, is such a certainty produced in the mind of the inestimable beauty of sunshine, as could have been formed by no argument conceivable. Imagine the attempt to make that beauty as certain as it is to us to one who had passed his entire life in the unlighted cavern! So it is only by trying Christianity, in its fitness to our deepest personal needs, of alliance with God, of moral renovation, of tranquillity, and of hope, that men can become utterly certain that it is from above, not a fabric, any more than the earth is, of human fancy, or a construction of human logic, or even a brilliant and lofty surmise of human aspiration, but a divine system, as is the atmosphere, as is radiant light, presented by God to the

world of mankind for their permanent sovereign life and peace'—*R S Storrs*

Very much to the same effect, Coleridge, in answer to the two questions—How can I comprehend Christianity? and How is its divine origin to be proved? writes—"To the first question I should answer Christianity is not a theory or a speculation, but a life not a philosophy of life, but a life, and a living process To the second TRY IT It has been eighteen hundred years in existence, and, has one individual left a record like the following 'I have tried it, and it did not answer I made the experiment faithfully, according to the directions, and the result has been a conviction of my own credulity' If neither your own experience nor the history of almost two thousand years has presented a single testimony to this purport, and if you have read and heard of many who have lived and died bearing witness to the contrary, and if you have yourself met with some one in whom in any other point you would place unqualified trust, who has on his own experience made report to you that He is faithful who promised, and what He promised he has proved Himself able to perform is it bigotry, if I fear that the unbelief which prejudices, and prevents the experiment, has its source elsewhere than in the uncorrupted judgment? that not the strong mind, but the enslaved will, is the true original infidel in this instance?"

The Mosaic law provided that "at the mouth of two or three witnesses shall the matter be established" (Deut xix 15,) and Jesus adopted the principle I apply it in this instance by quoting in conclusion the words of Dr Channing—"There is another evidence of Christianity, still more internal than any on which I have dwelt, an evidence to be felt rather than described, but not less real because founded on feeling I refer to that conviction of the divine Original of our religion, which springs up and continually gains strength in those who apply it habitually to their tempers and lives, and who imbibe its spirit and hopes

In such men there is a consciousness of the adaptation of Christianity to their noblest faculties; a consciousness of its exalting and consoling influences, of its power to confer the true happiness of human nature, to give that peace which the world cannot give, which assures them that it is not of earthly origin, but a ray from the Everlasting Light, a stream from the fountain of Heavenly Wisdom and Love. This is the evidence which sustains the faith of thousands who never read and cannot understand the learned books of Christian Apologists, who want perhaps words to explain the ground of their belief, but whose faith is of adamantine firmness, who hold the Gospel with a conviction more intimate and unwavering than mere argument ever produced."

To the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the two Creeds, I add a modern symbol, composed, I believe, by Professor Flint of Edinburgh

I —THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUR Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. AMEN

II —THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1 Thou shalt have none other gods before me [or beside me]

2 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them, for I the LORD, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth

generation of them that hate me and showing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments

3 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD, thy God, in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain

4 Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD, thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the LORD blessed the seventh day and hallowed it

5 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD, thy God, giveth thee

6 Thou shalt do no murder.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery

8 Thou shalt not steal

9 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour

10 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's

III.—"THE APOSTLES' CREED."

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, dead and buried, he descended into Hades; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence he shall come to judge the

quick, and the dead I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. AMEN

IV—THE NICENE CREED (325 A D)

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for the sake of us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, was made flesh, and became man by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, that he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sits at the right hand of the Father, is coming again with glory to judge the living and dead, and we believe also in the Holy Spirit"

V—STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE

I The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and duty

II There is but one God—a Spirit, self-existent, omnipresent, yet distinct from all other spirits and from all material things, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, and He alone is to be worshipped

III In the Godhead there are three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory

IV All things visible and invisible were created by God by the word of His power, and are so preserved and governed by Him; that while He is in no way the author of sin, all things serve the fulfilment of His wise and good and holy purposes

V God created man, male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures All men have the same origin, and so are of one blood and are brethren

VI Our first parents, being free to choose between good and evil, and being tempted of Satan, sinned against God, and all mankind descending from Adam by ordinary generation sinned in him, and offending in manifold ways against the good and holy law of God, justly deserve His wrath and punishment in this present life and in that which is to come

VII To save men from the guilt, corruption, and penalty of sin, God in His infinite love sent into the world His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom alone God has become incarnate, and through Whom alone men can be saved He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin He was true God and true man For sinful men He perfectly obeyed the law of God, and offered Himself a true and perfect sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile men to God He died on the cross, was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day He ascended to the right hand of God, where He maketh intercession for His people, and from whence He shall come again to raise the dead and to judge the world

VIII The Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, maketh men partakers of salvation, enlightening their minds by the truth of the Word of God, convincing them of their sin, persuading and enabling them to receive Christ Jesus as He is offered to them in the Gospel, and working in them all the fruits of righteousness

IX God, having given His Son to be the Saviour of the world, and sent His Holy Spirit to apply the purchased redemption, commandeth all men everywhere to repent of their sins, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, to own Him as their Lord, and to live a humble and holy life after His example and in obedience to His revealed will. Those

who believe and obey the Gospel of Christ are saved, and their privileges are—the full forgiveness of sins, adoption into the number of God's children, advancement in sanctification through the indwelling of the Spirit, and the hope of eternal glory. In all His gracious work the Holy Ghost useth and blesseth all means of grace, especially the Word, sacraments and prayer.

X It is the duty of all believers to unite in Church fellowship, to observe the sacraments and other ordinances of Christ, and to obey His laws, to continue in prayer, to keep holy the Lord's Day, to meet together for worship, to wait upon the preaching of His word, to give as God may prosper them for the support and extension of the Gospel. The sacraments appointed by Christ are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is a sign and seal of our union to Christ, the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and our engagement to be the Lord's. It is to be administered to those who profess their faith in Christ. The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death, and a sign and seal of the benefits thereof to believers. It is observed by His people in token of their faith in His sacrifice, their further engagement to serve Him, and their communion with Him and with one another. It is also the duty of members of the Church to manifest a spirit of purity and love among themselves and towards all men, to labour and pray for the spread of Christ's kingdom throughout the world, and to wait for His glorious Appearing.

XI At the last day the dead shall be raised, and all shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall receive according to the deeds done in this present life, whether good or bad. Those who have believed and obeyed the Gospel shall be openly acquitted and received into glory, but the unbelieving and wicked, being condemned, shall suffer the punishment due to their sins.

THE
ADAPTATION OF BIBLE RELIGION
TO THE
NEEDS AND NATURE OF MAN.

INTRODUCTORY

SKILFUL adaptation to their purpose is so constant a feature of the works of God, that we naturally look for it in every product of the Divine hand. If the human eye is wonderfully adapted to the purpose of vision, if the backbone, with its remarkable combination of properties—firm as a pillar, flexible as a chain, light in point of weight, and graceful in form—is a triumph of skilful adaptation, if the family constitution is an univalled contrivance for securing unity, affection, mutual help, and kindred virtues,—we may be sure that any scheme devised by God for promoting the spiritual and eternal welfare of men will exhibit remarkable features of adaptation to its purpose. Let there be a clear perception of the purpose on the one hand, and a competent knowledge of the scheme on the other, and the adaptation of the one to the other will follow as a matter of course.

The great problem which any true revelation must solve is, how to remove sin and its consequences. It is here that natural religion fails. Sin has created a gulf between man and God, it has disordered man's moral nature, it has compelled God, notwithstanding His infinite compassion, to hold him a criminal, with whom friendly fellowship is impossible. The great purpose of revelation is to solve this problem. It unfolds a divine plan designed to take away sin, reconcile God and the sinner, restore moral health to man's soul, and thus fit him anew for the ends for which he was formed. Is this scheme really adapted to its end?

Is the remedy suited to the disease? When Naaman washes in this Jordan is he really cleansed? In a word, is there a divine adaptation between the provision of the Gospel and the purpose for which it has been devised?

We have said that one of the chief effects of sin is to create a schism between God and man, and break up the friendly relation which would otherwise unite them. If the remedy be adapted to the disease, this is the chief evil for which it will provide a cure. But, besides this effect of sin, it has infected man's whole nature, and disturbed more or less the whole operations of his being. It has shown its influence very powerfully in his social relations, creating great discord between man and man, where harmony is so desirable. If the remedy be in all respects adequate, it must have a healing and elevating influence in all these directions; it must purify and regulate all the springs of activity; it must sanctify and brighten all the lawful pursuits of life, it must sweeten the relations of man to his fellow men, it may not all at once, even in a metaphorical sense, cause the wolf to dwell with the lamb, but it must create a movement toward that consummation—toward that restored golden age when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

We propose therefore in the present paper to consider the adaptation to this result of the plan of recovery for sinners, as unfolded in the Gospel and recorded in the Scripture. In doing so, we shall consider, I, Its *primary* or chief adaptation, *i e*, its adaptation to the case of man as a guilty and polluted being before God, and, II, Its *subordinate* adaptations—its adaptations to the physical, intellectual, and social nature of man,—its power to counteract the effects of sin in these departments, and thus, in all directions, redeem and elevate mankind. We assume that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the authorized records of the divine plan, and it is to them, therefore, that we go for information as to what the features of that plan really are.

I

ADAPTATION TO THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF MAN

IN demonstrati^{ng} the adaptation of the salvation of the Bible to the spiritual needs of man, considerable stress must be laid, in the first instance, on the consciousness of man himself. Inquiry must be made into the nature of his *experience* when he cordially receives the divine remedy, that is, when he cordially accepts Christ as his Saviour, and relies on Him for all the blessings of salvation. The sense of adaptation which comes to him between his own need and the remedy provided in the Gospel constitutes what has been called the *experimental evidence*, but to some this evidence has appeared not to be of a very solid and satisfactory nature. It has seemed too visionary and ideal, too near the region of dreams, too dependent on a heated imagination, in short, it has appeared to want that solid character which evidence on so vital a subject ought above all to possess. For this objection there might be valid reason if it were proposed to rely on a very limited body of experience—let us say, the experience of a single individual. But no one would base the argument on what might possibly be the vagaries of a single mind. The experimental argument is valid only if it express the result of a wide induction of cases, an induction so wide as fairly to represent the ordinary experience of those who cordially and earnestly receive Christ as Saviour. Moreover, it must be taken in connexion with the whole body of *external evidence*, the evidence of miracle and prophecy, the character of Christ and the spirit of the Gospel. Flanked by these bulwarks, the experimental evidence will be found to be of great interest and of much use.

The argument from the adaptation of the Gospel to the spiritual needs of man will come out more clearly if we specify some of these needs, and consider the manner in which the Gospel meets them.

I Chief of these needs is *reconciliation to God*. And prominent among the blessings that attend the

heartly reception of Christ is the conscious possession of reconciliation "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). The expressions in common use in reference to this process are such as denote the end of a great mental conflict, the finding of a secret treasure, the removal of an oppressive burden, the dawn of a glorious day after the anxieties and terrors of a weary night. How full the records of Christianity, inspired and uninspired, are of such experiences need not be said. Perhaps the most striking feature of the change that took place on the day of Pentecost, and at similar times, was the sense of intense relief, the feeling of profound satisfaction that filled and charmed the soul. The experience was so complete that no doubt remained whether or not it was the true remedy that had been received. No pagan who went to the cross, and believed on the Crucified One, ever returned home to balance arguments between the sacrifice of Christ, and the devices of propitiation which Paganism proposed. The same thing may be said of non-Christians now. When once the Gospel is spiritually received by a Hindu, no question remains as to whether a pilgrimage to Benares or an act of penance before the car of Jugannath, would not be more efficacious than faith in Christ. The sense of oneness with Him seems to solve all questions and remove all fears. The feet rest on the rock, and the new song of praise for sin forgiven, for grace bestowed, for the promise of all needful blessing bursts from the grateful heart. Nothing could express the process better than the words just quoted, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

Conspicuous cases of the same experience occur through all Church history. Luther's case is remarkable. Before his time the "easy, artless, unencumbered plan" of the Scriptures had been perverted into one of "the complex works of man." Divine grace and human merit had been rolled together, and the effect of the one had been neutralized, to a large extent by the presence of the other.

By a flash from heaven Luther apprehended the divine way of grace, and the peace which he had in vain sought for years descended into his soul. John Bunyan was another of the distinguished men whose burden, as he has symbolized it in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, fell from his shoulders when he came to the cross of Christ. Chalmers had a struggle similar to Luther's, and for a whole year of intense moral effort struggled to come up to the requirements of the moral law, but, in spite of all, he felt its heights more inaccessible than ever, while his own corruption seemed only to acquire new power. It was only when he truly accepted the truth of gratuitous salvation by Christ that peace came into his bosom, but once he rested on that foundation, he never had the slightest distrust of it, never felt a desire for any other security, or any other channel for the reception of heavenly blessings.

So far as the consciousness of those who have tried the remedy can testify in its favour, the evidence is complete. But besides this, reflexion on the nature of the Gospel provision confirms belief in its adaptation to the purpose in view. The great want in all other plans of reconciliation is the want of a propitiation of value sufficient to atone for sin. On the other hand, that which at once and conclusively commends the plan of the Gospel is the glorious sufficiency of the propitiation. The precious blood of Christ is abundantly sufficient to cancel the guilt of man. The awakened conscience feels both that a propitiation is needed, and that the propitiation must be adequate to the offence. It is in vain to tell the guilty conscience that God is merciful, or even that God is a father, and that His heart beats with a father's good will. What can such things do when one's own conscience loudly demands retribution for one's sins? The feeling that there must be a satisfaction to justice is simply overpowering. Was not David Absalom's father? Was not David's heart full of a father's compassion, nay, was he not subject to a weakness in that very region,—a weakness on which Absalom might well count

in his favour? Yet when Absalom slew Amnon, he could not meet his father, he could not remain at Jerusalem, it behoved him to flee to Geshur. All his father's affection could not save him. How can we count on the Almighty disregarding the claims of justice in a way in which even David could not disregard them? How vain the attempt to find a place of security on the shaking sides and flaming heights of Sinai! A propitiation must be found to give the sinner confidence before a holy God. And of all possible or conceivable propitiations one only possesses the needful quality—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Even though the revelation in Scripture of the evil of sin far exceeds all that the natural conscience teaches, the sufficiency of the propitiation of the Gospel is in no degree impaired, rather it comes out the more clearly the more fully the demands of the law are tabulated, for the very glory of the divine method is that 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound' (Rom v 20).

2. Another of the soul's spiritual needs is—*renovation*. Our moral nature is disordered, and one of the chief evidences of disorder is the conflict between duty and inclination. Conscience and the will are not at one. We may form beautiful ideals, but we cannot realize them. Desires which are known to be poor and mean often prevail in us against the voice of conscience and even the protests of reason. And often the state of things is worse than that of a conflict in which the bad usually gets the better of the good. In many the result is a state of helpless captivity. In these cases, lusts of the body rise to sovereign power, and crush down in ignominious bondage every good and wholesome desire. Men and women are degraded far below the level of brutes. In the grip of imperious lusts they are powerless, struggle as they may. Where the outward degradation is not so great, the triumph of evil is not so conspicuous, but that evil reign is often lamentably apparent, even to the persons them-

selves. Often then lives are governed by a selfishness that, regardless of others, seeks to secure everything for themselves. The will of God, which they know to be the true sovereign authority of the world, is little regarded, except in so far as the ordinary usages of society may happen to agree with it. Their lives do not conform to any noble standard. And even at the very best, there is such a discord between what they are inclined to do and what they ought to do, that their highest achievements in duty are but the result of a hard struggle—not the free spontaneous movements of souls delighting in the ways of truth and righteousness.

For this great need of the human soul, likewise, the Gospel has its provision. It is a provision which embraces the whole nature, but its chief peculiarity is that it lays hold on the affections. It creates a personal attachment between the sinner and the Saviour who died for him. It impresses the heart with a profound sense of the kindness and love shown by Jesus in suffering, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. This attachment to Christ acts sympathetically on the will causing it to turn from all that is offensive to Christ, to all that is well-pleasing in His sight. Nor is this change caused by the action of our own powers. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, has entered the soul, and His office is to convert and elevate it, to raise conscience from the dust and restore it to its throne, to bring conscience and will into harmony, in a word, to renew the whole nature after the image of Him who created it. Revelations are made by the Spirit of divine truth and human duty, towards which the soul is moved. A higher ideal than any that the human mind ever devised is placed before the eyes—the perfect example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Experience of the sweetness of divine fellowship strengthens every motive to a life of faith and holiness. Prayers like that of Paul for the Ephesians indicate the infinite fulness of the stores out of which the soul may seek its supplies, “For this

cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians iii 14-19)

In regard to renovation as to reconciliation, experience shows that this Gospel provision is so superior to any other, that once it is apprehended the soul is satisfied of its efficacy, and never turns from it in search of another. Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ was St Augustine's introduction at once to inward peace and satisfaction, and to the secret of a holy life. In receiving Christ as their personal Saviour, both Luther and Chalmers found a power capable of overcoming all the unruly motions of their hearts. And in all ages of the Church and in all ranks of life, personal attachment to Jesus Christ has been found by far the most efficient means of mortifying the flesh, conquering the world, crushing selfishness, and nurturing philanthropy. Obedience acquires a new character when it springs from love, and especially such love as Christ inspires, nor is any sacrifice too great or any attainment too lofty when it may be said of us. We live, yet not we, but Christ liveth in us, and the life that we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal ii 20).

3 This leads us to notice another of the spiritual needs of the soul—*Divine fellowship*. Man, by his very constitution, is dependent on God. He cannot reach the perfection of his nature or the maturity of his powers without the nurturing, expanding developing influence of God. He depends on God as really and as much as the earth depends on the sun. There can hardly be conceived a body less complete in itself, or more dependent on another body,

than this earth. What would it be without the sun? A poor, opaque ball without light, or heat, or colour, perpetual night brooding over land and sea, mountain and valley, perpetual frost binding all its waters, and making life impossible on its surface. Such, too, must man be without God. And so we find that even in his disordered state, and while his controversy with God is not yet ended, man vaguely thirsts after Him. He desires to be nearer the great Being in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being. Like a traveller that has heard vaguely from natives of some great lake or river that determines the aspect of the country he is exploring, and is constantly trying to reach it, so man desires to get nearer to God, on whom all the problems of life and all the aspirations of the soul depend. This feeling is indeed balanced by another—by man's shrinking from God, and endeavouring to hide from Him, like Adam among the trees of the garden. Conscious guilt inspires terror, but it does not quite subdue the natural feeling of dependence, and the natural desire to know more of God. There must be a chief good somewhere, and where can it be but in God? There must be something to satisfy the soul, to answer its high aspirations. There must be a Being who can teach, and correct, and guide it and bring it up to the highest enjoyment of which it is capable. On such a Being the thoughtful soul yearns. What provision does the Gospel make for the satisfaction of this need?

The Gospel not only reveals God in Christ as providing reconciliation and renovation, but likewise as entering into the closest and most loving relations with all who accept His offers and believe on His Son. The reality and the intimacy of this communion were beautifully shadowed forth by the incarnation of God's Son. In the person of Christ, the nature of God and the nature of man met to constitute a single personality. No more wonderful proof could have been given of God's purpose that the fellowship between God and man, in the economy of grace, should be of the most

intimate kind Under the provisions of the Gospel the natural relation of creatures to a creator is supplemented by relations greatly higher God is now the Father of His children, and so far as the difference between the finite and the infinite allows, they are on the same footing with Him as children are with an earthly father Sometimes the relation is expressed by the figure of a spouse, the figure that denotes the closest and tenderest of all human ties Derived from other objects, we have such figures as that of the shepherd in reference to his flock, the vine to the branches, and the members of the body to the head But the Divine Person with whom these close relations are formed in the first instance, is not He who dwells in light inaccessible and full of glory "The Word was made flesh, and *dwelt among us*," and though "no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" Our fellowship with the Father is through the Son, through Him who was "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh" No better link of connexion could be conceived than that furnished by Him who is Son of God and Son of man in one on the one side, the brother of humanity, on the other side the fellow of the Everlasting God

It is impossible even to touch on all that comes to the earnest believing heart from this restored fellowship with God. We simply note a few outstanding points

(a) *Transformation into God's likeness* By a law of our nature we imitate those in whose company we often are, and the more we admire and love them, the more do we thus imitate So hearts that are much in fellowship with God, through Jesus Christ, become assimilated to Him "We all," says the Apostle, "with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord"

(b) *Invigoration of our spiritual life* Like all living things which do not contain the spring of vitality

in themselves, our spiritual life decays and languishes if it be not sustained by regular communion with the Fountain of living waters. Fellowship with God sustains faith, courage, humility, unselfish love, patience, meekness, and all the other qualities of the renovated nature. They that wait on the Lord renew their strength: they mount up with wings as eagles; they run and are not weary, and they walk and are not faint (Isa xl 31).

(c) *Support amid toils, and consolation under trials.* Strong men may rejoice to run a race, and the glory of young men is their strength. But as years roll on and strength becomes impaired, constant toil comes to be oppressive, and the call for patience and perseverance is not easily responded to. Even in the very dew of youth, many turn from a life of hard toil and dally with carnal pleasure, let the cost be what it may. And if toil protracted to the very close of life with little relaxation and much monotony, be hard to bear, much more intolerable is the burden of disappointment, anxiety, and pain. It is not easy to fight one's way through care, opposition, perplexity, and endless worries. It is not easy to bear the loss of fortune and friends, or of health and happiness. The blows that fall on the human heart are often fearfully severe. It was surely not meant that man should have to bear all these things in loneliness and helplessness. In nature, we find that in the neighbourhood of stinging plants, other plants grow whose juices neutralize the sting. Is it the sad lot of man to bear the sharpest and most irritating of all stings apart from the possibility of relief and succour? Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there?

For this very touching and terrible want of his nature, fellowship with God furnishes the blessed remedy. In many ways it sweetens the bitter waters of life. Hard toil becomes easier to bear when it is felt to be part of the discipline arranged for us by a loving Father, when, instead of some austere and heartless taskmaster, we feel that our service is done to the Lord.

Patience and perseverance become easier when life is measured by eternity, and at the close of its brief hour, there is the sure prospect of unending rest and peace. Burdens are more easy to bear when the promise is realized, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Psa lv 22). Trusting in Him who clothes the lilies and feeds the ravens, saves the heart from many a visitation of distracting care. No feature of our religion is more blessed or more remarkable than its provision of comfort in overwhelming trial. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa xliii 2). "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

(d) *Satisfaction and rest of soul* No higher or better portion can even be conceived than that which comes to us by Christ. Our relation to God is the closest that can be. Our inheritance is the best and the largest—"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup" (Psa xvi 5). Our difficulty lies in realizing all to which we receive a claim. The smallness of our capacity, the stiffness of our faculties, the dullness of our hearts, the worldliness of our feelings, may all distress us, but not the smallness of our heritage. That heritage leaves no reasonable desire unsatisfied. While others sigh that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, the hearts of God's children delight themselves in fatness. Others are jaded and weary—they renew their youth like the eagle. Others feel that there is nothing worth having—they say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on the earth that I desire beside Thee, my heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Psa lxxiii 25, 26).

(e) *New enjoyment in nature and in life* Nature has a new aspect and a new interest for those who know

God, and love Him as their Friend and Father. It is not only the work of His hands, it is the utterance of His mind and the revelation of His heart. Its mountains are symbols of the stability of His love. Its streams represent the perpetual current of His goodness. The sun shows Him brightening, warming, fertilizing, beautifying all. The silver dawn and the golden sunset foreshadow a life in which the bright hope and joyousness of youth are united with the tranquility and mature joys of age. And as nature thus becomes full of new beauty and glory, so ordinary life is wonderfully enriched and sweetened. God "blesseth the habitation of the just" (Prov. iii, 33). Daily bread is sweeter when it comes from His hands. All the blessings and enjoyments of domestic and social life become better when they are no longer rivals to God Himself, or regarded as the chief good, but when they are received from Him, in addition to His unspeakable gift, to increase the sum of daily enjoyment. The resources of art and learning, the treasures of literature and science, the amenities of social intercourse, have a new zest and satisfaction when crowned by the blessing of God. The thorny wilderness is changed into a smiling garden, for "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. iii, 17).

Let us add a word respecting that exercise of soul—prayer—by which its fellowship with God is chiefly maintained.

To have intercourse with heaven is always elevating, to maintain the habit as a daily exercise, if only it be devoutly carried out, if it be prayer in spirit, and not merely in form, is truly hallowed. The ladder between earth and heaven, on which the angels of God ascend and descend, is a glorious possession in any house. To have a means of communication with the Heavenly Father, by which every want, every care, every sorrow and trial may be carried to His ear, and by which the answer may come down in contributions of wisdom and strength, of patience and trust, of peace

and joy and hope, is a privilege of priceless value. When we think too how prayer re-acts on the soul, lifting it up to heaven in the very exercise, placing it at the throne of grace, bringing it into the very presence of the living God, we may understand something of its marvellous influence. Nothing is more striking than its tranquillizing power, however great the tempest that may have swept over the soul.

“ Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make !
What heavy burdens from our bosom take !
What parch'd lands refresh us with a shower !
We kneel and all around us seems to lower ,
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear
We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power ,
Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong
That we are ever overborne with care ?
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee ? ”
TRENCH

4 We add a fourth spiritual need of man's soul for which provision is made under the Christian scheme—*human fellowship in the service and enjoyment of God*. Our nature is social, and however necessary it is to recruit the springs of spiritual life by personal communion with our Father who seeth in secret, we are greatly dependent on the fellowship of our brethren for help and stimulus, for guidance and encouragement in the service of God. Under the Old Testament there were the great yearly festivals, when faces were brightened and hearts cheered by the companionship of friends without number, assembled to worship the God of Israel. Under the New Testament, we have the Christian Church, with its organization of ordinances and its spirit of brotherhood, its meetings for common worship, and its methods of united work. We have that great society, nearly nineteen centuries old, in which we are united to the great and good of all times and lands. We are compassed about by an exceeding great cloud of witnesses, whose past attain-

ments rouse us from our apathy, and set before us a right noble goal. We get the benefit of the varied gifts and graces which are specially bestowed on some members of the Church, in order that others may share the edification which they are fitted to promote. We share the joy of common blessings, and the distress of common trials. Our hearts are enlarged by sympathy for our brethren and in watering others, we are watered ourselves. We get work to engage in, which draws out our energies, which constrains us to be partners with God, which offers a reward beyond all earthly recompense, which beareth fruit unto life eternal. We get a brotherhood to love, and to love us in turn, we find congenial friends whose kindness brightens our path in the life that now is, as it helps us on toward that which is to come. In a word, we come to Mount Zion, and the city of the living God, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and with them we enjoy all the more the fellowship of God, the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Heb. xii. 22-24).

Such are some of the provisions of the Gospel for the needs of man's spiritual nature. Let us say regarding them that they are as much realities of human experience as any other phenomena that appeal to the inner nature of man. They no more belong to the region of dreams or shadows than do these other phenomena. Is it a reality of my inner experience that when I am frustrated in my fondest hopes, when I am baffled in my strongest efforts, when I am deprived of my most prized treasure, my heart is agitated, I feel a sting of pain? Then it is not less a reality of my experience that when I am able to believe that all this is appointed for me by a loving Father, and is part of the discipline by which He prepares me for the very highest blessings I can know, the pain is relieved, the sharpness of the sting is removed, my soul returns to

a state of rest. Must I draw a line between these experiences, and while the one remains a hard and indubitable reality, must I concede that the other is but the baseless fabric of a vision? It were gross absurdity to do so, and it were unreasonable in any one to ask that it be done. As well might you tell one that the sting of a nettle is a reality, but that the soothing influence of the juice of the dock is a mere dream of the imagination. In the physical world both are equally realities. And in the spiritual world, while the disorder and terror and weariness and woefulness of human life cannot be denied, as little can it be fairly questioned that even in the midst of trial, faith in God as revealed in Christ brings order, satisfaction, strength, comfort, and serenity of soul, enables one to rise above the region of disturbance, and on the serene heights of hope, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

II.

SUBORDINATE ADAPTATIONS

IN proceeding to point out some of the subordinate adaptations of our religion to the nature of man, we must bear in mind that being subordinate, they cannot be expected to occupy in the Word of God that place of prominence which belongs to the primary purpose of revelation. It cannot be too emphatically insisted on that that purpose, as we have just seen, is the restoration of fallen man to the favour, the likeness, and the fellowship of God. If the Bible had not had this for its great object, it would have had no sufficient *raison d'être*, nor need we be surprised that those who do not regard it as given for this end, perceive no sufficient ground for the high claims that are advanced on its behalf. But it is not fair to judge it as if its great object had been to give a scientific record of the

construction of the material world, or to present a philosophical theory of the universe, and of all things human and divine, or to settle the principles of political government, or the laws of social well-being. To do so would be as foolish as to judge of a watch for some other property than its capacity to keep time, or of a rifle for some other feature than its power to carry a bullet to the mark. Evidently a book given for one grand purpose must be judged of mainly by its capacity to realize that purpose. The Bible, designed to reveal to man the way of life, must be judged of mainly by its adaptation to that end.

But at the same time it is reasonable to believe that if the Author of our religion be also the Former of our nature, proofs will be found in the contents of the Bible of many subordinate adaptations to that nature. The simple fact that both are from the same source would justify this expectation. In addition to this, we are to bear in mind that the whole nature of man has suffered from sin, and that the healing influence of the remedy may be expected to be as comprehensive as the disastrous influence of the disease. Our relation to God, once it is restored, cannot but have a beneficent influence on the other relations we were designed to sustain. The flying off of a planet from its orbit must damage all its internal economies, its return to its orbit must tend to rectify them. We are now to show how Christianity, besides rectifying man's relation to God, bears beneficially on his other relations and interests, and though the points which we select may not be very conclusive separately, the sum of them will be found to constitute an argument of no insignificant strength.

1. *Adaptation to Man's Bodily Nature*

IN a sense, the Bible teaches us to think lightly of our body. "Fear not them that kill the body, but fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt x 28). But evidently it is in a comparative sense that this estimate of the body is made; it is as if it had been said, to save the body at the

expense of your soul is like saving your coat at the expense of your skin, or saving a jewel case at the expense of the jewel "I buffet my body," says St. Paul, "and bring it into bondage, lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor ix 27, R V) The body, according to his figure, was prone to be presumptuous, and to crave a consideration and tenderness of treatment that interfered with far higher interests and claims The apostle deemed the presumption intolerable, he buffeted his body as some men did then slaves, to teach it its own place, and not suffer it to trample on what was infinitely more precious than itself

But while the Bible is most particular to allot to the body its own place of subordination, it manifests no small measure of regard for it in that place as a part of the nature of man.

1 Thus, in the first place, it regards it as a *divine work*, well fitted to fill us with admiration and gratitude towards its great Author "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," says the Psalmist (Psa cxxxix 14), and to justify the remark he sets forth at some length the marvels of the process by which the embryo in the womb is advanced to the wonderful structure of the human frame. Each organ of the body is the work of the divine hand—"He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" (Ps xciv 9) So likewise the whole plan of the body, the adjustment of organ to organ, is a divine work "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor xii 17) A structure like the body, on which God has bestowed so much pains, cannot but be worthy of our care This is the very opposite of the Manichæan doctrine, that the body is the work of the Evil One, or that it has been hopelessly corrupted by evil influences It is not to be destroyed, but kept under,

just as the imagination is to be kept under the sway of reason, just as any lawful desire is to be kept under the control of conscience. Its place is the place of a servant, in that place it deserves all due consideration, but never, on any pretext whatever, is it to be allowed the place of master.

2. Regard for the welfare of the body was shown by our Lord in *His miracles of healing*, and other mighty works. By far the greater part of His miracles were directed to restore the functions of the body. Blindness, deafness, lameness, paralysis, leprosy, fever, were tokens of bodily disturbance and disorder, and the power of Christ was employed to remove the disorder, and to make the sufferers "whole." In the wilderness He had respect for the hungry multitude, and (though He had not done it for Himself under Satan's temptation) He provided food miraculously to assuage their bodily craving. The evil spirits which He cast out were odious to Him, for besides perverting the soul from its highest functions, they destroyed the very instincts of the body, driving some of their victims now into the fire and now into the water. In the symbolical language of Scripture, the highest spiritual blessings find appropriate emblems in connexion with the body. Jesus is the Shepherd who tends and feeds us, and the Physician who heals us, He supplies the bread of life and the water of life, as Moses in the wilderness procured the manna from heaven, and the water from the rock, and in such a book as the Song of Solomon, according to the generally received view, the highest style of physical beauty is employed as a symbol of that moral excellency that marks Him as the chief among ten thousand.

3. Higher than this, however, is the degree of respect accorded to the body in the Bible, when it is represented as "*a member of Christ*." That mystical union of believers to Christ, which is so instructive an emblem of the manner in which we share His spiritual benefits, embraces the body as well as the soul. He is the Head of the body, of which they are the

members "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (1 Cor vi 15). For a Christian to pollute his body with sensual sin is to degrade and dishonour a part of Christ. Instead of a trifling offence, it is a horrible transgression.

4 Similar is the view in those passages where the members of the body are represented as in a sense *subjects of sanctification*, and servants of righteousness. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess v 23). "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom vi 13). "Let us draw near with a true heart, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb x 22). If it be asked, How can the body become a subject of sanctification? Is not the seat of sin in the heart, in the will, not in the flesh? Undoubtedly, and the reclaiming of the members of the body from the service of sin to the service of righteousness is a spiritual process. Nevertheless, the expressions in question may find justification if we consider the law of *bodily habit*. What is done often by the organs of the body comes to be done readily, almost unconsciously and mechanically. The profane swearer utters his vile words almost unconsciously, the organs of speech seem instinctively to frame the customary sounds. A sanctified body, on the other hand, is one in which, by the law of habit, all the powers and organs adapt themselves readily to the purposes of righteousness. A body thus trained is more worthy of honour than a body habituated to the ways of evil, in seeking to effect this change, the Bible honours the body.

5 A still higher step seems to be taken in Scripture when the body is set forth as the *temple of the Holy Ghost*, so that to defile it is a sacrilege, a shame-

ful dishonouring of a holy shrine In reality it is the same view that is conveyed by this figure as by that which represents the Christian's body as a member of Christ But in the figure of the temple, the idea is perhaps more imposing, it is associated with what of all material thing seems to be purest, and most deserving to be preserved in purity—a temple, and with the Person who, by reason of His purity and purifying function, enjoys *par excellence* the title of Holy—the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost

6 Lastly, the Bible doctrine of *the resurrection* serves to elevate our respect for the body Even in the grave it is guarded and consecrated by Christ Bereaved friends may rear fences and place beautiful monuments, or scatter flowers and immortelles at the resting-places of their dead, but such tokens of respect for the ashes of the departed are trifling compared to the honour paid to it by Christ "Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise" (Isa. xxvi. 19) "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption, it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power, it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42-44) "He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21)

Thus, whoever they may be who speak slightly of the body, as if regard for its welfare were unbecoming or unworthy of Christians, it is not from the Bible that they take their cue Nor is the Christian minister fully discharging his duty who does not take pains on suitable occasions to urge regard for bodily welfare, and attention to the principles which serve to advance it; subject always to the condition, that its claims are not paramount but subordinate, and that its place in

* Translated by Lowth "Thy dead shall live, My deceased, they shall arise"

By Deitzsch "Thy dead will live My corpses rise again"

By Cheyne "Thy dead shall live, My dead bodies shall arise"

the economy of human life is not to rule, but to serve

II *Adaption to Man's Intellectual Nature*

If there were nothing else in our religion fitted to advance our intellectual nature, the great topics with which the Bible is conversant, when taken up earnestly by men, could not fail to bear fruit in this region. God, man, sin, punishment, redemption, propitiation, duty, grace, free-will, infinity, eternity, are fitted, above all other topics, to exercise and strengthen our intellectual powers. Minds occupied with such topics become stronger and deeper, and in grappling with matters too great, in their fullest reach, for their faculties, are led to stretch these faculties to the furthest limit of their power. Of this reflex influence of the grand truths of religion on our intellectual nature we will not say more, as our present subject is the *subordinate* adaptations of the Bible—adaptations more or less apart from its great fundamental purpose. In this restricted sense, we may note

1 *The recognition of Nature in the Bible* We mean nature as a fit subject for intellectual exercise, abounding in phenomena that invite investigation, and in spiritual influences, worthy of appreciation and rich in beneficial effect. The interest, beauty, and glory of nature are often set before us in Scripture. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Psa cxi, 2). Our respect is claimed for Solomon, in that "he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." The whole book of Job encourages and adapts itself to an admiring love of nature,—a calmly intellectual, a gently emotional study of its wonders, including not merely the furniture of our globe, but also the starry heavens. The Psalms and the prophets present nature to us in her more ideal aspects—the sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, the clouds as Jehovah's chariot, the winds His messengers, the heavens the curtains of His abode. The psalm of the seven thunders, as it has

been called—the 29th—represents the various effects of a thunderstorm as utterances of the voice of Jehovah. The apostle finds a very comforting doctrine of theology in the saddest tones of nature—he hears creation groaning, but her groans are not the pains of death but the pains of birth—the throes and convulsions through which she is giving birth to the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (Rom viii 22,23). The same apostle finds in the process by which a grain of wheat passes into a state of dissolution, to reappear in a fuller form of life, an emblem of the resurrection of the body. Among the last of the emblems of the Bible are those in which gold and precious stones and pearls are used to represent the glories of the New Jerusalem.

2 The Bible has a benignant aspect toward music, poetry, and the fine arts generally. Music indeed has received the highest consecration in its pages. The harp of David is associated with the holiest fellowship of the soul with God. The union of many voices in song was one of the chief features of that vision of heavenly things and places which John had in Patmos. No Hallelujah Chorus on earth has ever reached the dimensions or the thrilling power of that which the apostle heard, sung by ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

A vein of poetry runs through the Bible, and some of its finest parts are altogether poetical. We have didactic poetry in Job, lyric in the Psalms, idyllic in the Song of Solomon, descriptive in Isaiah, allegorical in parables like the Prodigal Son, dramatic in the Apocalypse. The study of the Bible is eminently fitted to give a poetical turn to the mind. It leaves its poetical impress alike on high and low. Dante, Spenser, Milton, Klopstock drew their highest inspiration from it, and to many other poets it has suggested their finest thoughts. More remarkable, perhaps, is the poetic cast which the Bible gives to common minds. Poetical views of life, as presented in the Bible,—on the one hand, the conflicts of the world, the storms of trial, the wanderings in this weary wilderness, and, on the other, the unseen

protector, the final victory, the everlasting glory,—have not only taken possession of myriads of devout minds in common life, but have served materially to blunt the edge of pain, to transform the present, and to brighten the future. There are few hearts that are not thrilled by that simple melody —

“ O God of Bethel ’ by whose hand
Thy people still are fed,
Who, through this weary pilgrimage,
Hast all our fathers led ”

In the days of American slavery it was observed that the favourite hymns and songs of the devout negroes borrowed the poetical vein of the Bible, whether they bore on the overthrow of the oppressor, or on the land of rest and peace that awaited the oppressed. If it be one of the highest functions of poetry to bring down through the imagination some rays of brightness to touch up the dreary ways of common life, it must be owned that in this respect the poetry of the Bible has a pre-eminent place.

We find nothing in the Bible that bears directly on painting as a fine art. But architecture has a conspicuous place. The temple of Solomon is an object of no small interest, and the minuteness with which its dimensions and other structural features are specified, invests it with peculiar importance. Ezekiel’s description of the restored temple indicates the architectural mind. And in the New Testament, though no temple is seen in the New Jerusalem, yet the symmetry, the proportions, and the materials of the city convey the notion of an imposing architecture. In the Bible we are past that period when stateliness of form and beauty of structure have not begun to be thought of; but we are equally far from the time when they are thought of beyond everything else. Whatever importance belongs to them is wholly subordinate; they are nothing, and less than nothing, unless they are subordinate to the great heavenly Temple which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone.

3 In regard to the bearing of the Bible on science and philosophy, it is true that when these words occur, they are used in a bad sense science is, "science falsely so-called", and "philosophy" is coupled with vain deceit. But the word rendered science* is more correctly rendered "knowledge" in the Revised Version, and the philosophy denounced was a way of philosophizing which was not the handmaid but the rival of the Gospel. The whole style of speculation in those times tended either to corrupt Christianity or to discredit it altogether. Men of scientific and philosophic habit, owning the claims of Christianity as a revelation from heaven, and placing themselves like little children at the feet of Jesus, though not unknown, were far from common. At the same time, it is easy to show that there is nothing in the Bible opposed to science and philosophy in their due place and legitimate purpose. On the contrary, it is certain that the Bible, rightly understood, fosters those habits of mind which lie at the foundation of science and philosophy, namely, a love of order and a spirit of investigation. The Bible quickens the faculties that apprehend abstract truth, and the relations of truth, and furnishes them, as we have seen, with a noble field for exercise. The doctrines of sound philosophy often run parallel to the doctrines of theology. Men can hardly devote themselves to the deeper truths of Scripture without getting on the rails of philosophy. The danger is lest they travel on them too far, and forget that however desirable it may be for certain reasons to get at common principles in order to explain phenomena, natural and spiritual, the great glory of the Gospel lies in its being a simple message—almost level to the capacity of a child. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John v 11).

III *Adaptation to Man's Social Nature*

1 CONSPICUOUS under this head is the place in the Bible of the institution which lies at the base of all

* 1 Tim vi 20

social prosperity—**THE FAMILY** In the Old Testament much is made of the family In the Ark of Noah, the eight souls saved were a single household The lives of the patriarchs abound in beautiful glimpses of family life The filial submission of Isaac, the attachment of Jacob and Rachel, the brotherly forgiveness of Joseph, the noble self-sacrifice of Judah, the beautiful scene at Jacob's death-bed, the exquisite attachments of Ruth and Naomi, the passionate grief of David for Absalom, the loyalty of the Rechabites to their father,—such things though not unmixed with evil, show how under the Old Testament the family was often the nursery of a singularly pure and beautiful affection But the New Testament furnishes the ripest and purest pattern of family life Banishing polygamy, the Gospel promotes that concentration of affection between man and wife, which is the foundation of family unity and attachment Elevating woman from the place of a slave or subordinate to be the helpmeet of man, it encourages the outflow of all that tenderness of heart which fills the home with sunshine and beauty The case of Jesus and Mary throws a beautiful halo round the relation of son and mother Adding the bond of grace to that of nature, Christianity creates a new and closer tie, teaching members of families to long for each other's welfare with yearnings inexpressibly strong But in this direction the Christian Church has even yet before her a path of almost unbounded progress Instances of family life of the highest type are not too common, nor can Spitta's eulogy be pronounced over all

"O happy house! O home supremely blest!

Where Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, art entertained
As the most welcome and beloved guest,

With true devotion and with love unfeigned,

Where all hearts beat in unison with Thine,
Where eyes grow brighter as they look on Thee,

Where all are ready, at the slightest sign,
To do Thy will, and do it heartily "

2 The Bible explicitly and strongly recognizes
THE STATE Civil government indeed is placed on

the highest and firmest basis which it is possible for it to occupy—it is consecrated by a Divine Charter. The consecration does not extend necessarily to particular forms of government, nor to the individuals who may be in possession; it rather has to do with the institution itself. It is not merely as a matter of 'social contract' that we are to render to Cæsar things that are Cæsar's, we are to do so "for conscience sake." The strong sanction thus given to civil government operates in two ways,—on the side of the rulers and on the side of the ruled. On the side of the rulers it furnishes a strong motive to just and careful rule, since the sword in their hands has been entrusted to them by God and ought therefore to be used with a high regard to His will. On the side of the ruled, it supplies a sacred motive to obedience—a motive fed from the deepest fountain of spiritual life. On this basis a barrier is erected against despotism on the one side, and disorder on the other. Before the eye of the rulers there is set the highest model of a just and beneficent rule—the rule of Him of whom it was said 'He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. He shall deliver the needy when He crieth the poor also, and him that hath no helper' (Psa lxxii 2 12). No higher principle of law was ever laid down than the Bible rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here we have the germ of a whole code. And more than that the Gospel guides us to the spirit which alone can secure the end of laws—it gives our neighbour a place in our hearts for it fills us with longings for his highest good.

3. The Bible recognizes many of the *more subordinate conditions of man's social well-being*

For illustration of this remark we turn first of all, to the law of Moses. The social provisions of that law were numerous, varied, and most beneficial. By the general partition of landed property and its return at the jubilee to the original owners the citizens received a substantial stake in the community and a powerful inducement to industry and diligence. The

evils of monotony and overtoil were checked by the interspersion of frequent holidays with the days of labour, but as most of these holidays were associated with religious service, the tendency to frivolity and dissipation was effectually met. The whole nation was raised to a high moral and intellectual platform by a system, real if not formal, of universal education, in which instruction in God's law held the highest place, and all the lofty and inspiring memories of the past were brought to bear on the young mind at its most susceptible period. Each family was stimulated to self-respect by the careful preservation of its genealogy, incidental cases of poverty were provided with genial alleviations, and the certain prospect of regaining its position within fifty years was held out to every down-broken family. Attention was given to the laws of health through the ceremonial cleansings that were enjoined, applicable both to the person and to the dwelling, for the symbolical, the spiritual, and the sanitary went hand in hand. Never in any constitution, ancient or modern, was so careful provision made for the social department of national welfare. Seldom indeed has any express provision been made for it at all. It was doubtless in some degree a fruit of the unexampled excellence of their social system that long after the Hebrew commonwealth was overthrown, the Jewish people continued to possess such extraordinary vitality, and to be marked, so much above other nations, for industry, intelligence, and economy. Alexander the Great found them the best class of colonists for his new cities. Long after the destruction of Jerusalem, beggars, properly speaking, except those afflicted with illness, were unknown in Palestine, and are still little known among the Jews. And the average length of life is to this day greater among the Jews than in other communities. In the social department of life, subordinate though it is, the influence for good of the Mosaic legislation is apparent to this day.*

* See Michaelis' *Commentaries*, Wines on the *Laws of the Hebrews*, Edersheim's *History of the Jewish People*.

If now we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we remark that though the latter contains no express social legislation, it silently lays the foundation of social benefits of the highest order. It has been well said by Vinet, "Jesus Christ instituted little, but inspired much." Sometimes it has been made a charge against our Lord that He did not denounce slavery, vile and cruel as the system was under the Romans. But our Lord made it a rule not to denounce directly the social abominations that swarmed around Him. If He had bent His energies in this way, He would only have been putting new patches upon old garments. What our Lord did was to form a new society,—the Christian Church—a society, penetrated by his own spirit of love and goodness, in which He was to live and move, making all things new. He sent forth a spirit that could not fraternize with slavery, nor with the fashionable amusements of the theatre and the circus, nor with the loose *abandon* of fashionable life. The faith that was to overcome the world would overcome its social corruptions too, and the atmosphere which it bred, while it stifled all the offspring of pagan or worldly selfishness, would foster all that was just and generous, lovely, and of good report.

The truth of these remarks will become more apparent if we briefly note the bearing of the Gospel, first, on social rights; second, on social duties, and third, on social graces.

1. **SOCIAL RIGHTS.** Perhaps the most convenient formula of social right is the French trilogy—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. These three things are held to be essential conditions of human life. Let us mark how quietly yet effectively the Gospel provides for them in its own way.

Liberty. Under Christ we are bought with a price—His precious blood—and thus we become His property. But He does not treat us as slaves, but as sons, we are not children of the bond woman, but children of the free. We are *δούλοι* (bondmen) yet *ἐλεύθεροι* (free). But the relation in which we stand to Christ

is incompatible with the claim of any man to hold us in slavery. No man is entitled in the sight of God to come between my soul and the Saviour who has redeemed it. I have become a member of Christ, who shall hold a member of Christ in bondage? If Paul as a Roman citizen claimed the privileges of a free man, how much more may a member of Christ? This we say, is the peculiar ground on which the Gospel vindicates our freedom. The Bible does not discuss the question of natural right. That question stands on its own ground. But the Gospel establishes a relation between Christ and every believing man which is simply incompatible with slavery. Slavery and other social corruptions vanish before it, like the mist on the mountains before the summer sun.

Equality Where equality is a reality and a possibility, the Gospel upholds it, where it is a phantom and a folly, it repudiates it. Nothing brings out the essential equality of all men before God so clearly and so powerfully as the Gospel. Its doctrines of sin and grace are very levelling, but while the one levels down, the other levels up. As sin has wrought a common ruin, so grace has provided a common redemption. There is no royal road to heaven. No man can be saved by being "almost a Christian." The greatest emperor must enter heaven, if he enter it at all, by the same door as the humblest of his menials. Thus far, the Bible teaches equality. But it does not teach equality where equality does not exist and cannot be realized. It does not teach equality of capacity, equality of effort, equality of worth, equality of influence, equality of gifts, or even equality of property. It recognises the distinctions of master and servant, of rich and poor, of wise and foolish, of men who double their talents, and men who tie them up in a napkin. It commends self-denying generosity, like that of the early Christians, as a high attainment of the spirit of brotherhood, but it does not enjoin it. The poor, said Christ, ye will always have with you, and the provision He made for them was a permanent provision, when He gave to his followers the spirit which sees in

the poor members of Christ, and helps and blesses them for Jesus' sake

And this makes true *brotherhood* The idea which it baffles all the efforts of mere politicians and constitution-mongers to turn into fact, is realized in the Gospel "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Luke xxiii 8) The Christian society finds room for an idea which eludes the grasp of the politician Paul, writing to Philemon, concerning Onesimus, his runaway slave who had become a believer in Christ, sends him back, "not now a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, both to me, and how much more to thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord" To carry out the idea of fraternity requires a love and a humility which politics cannot gender, for politics cannot break down the pride and the stiffness of the human heart "Honour all men" is emphatically a Christian precept

"Grace," says Archbishop Leighton,* "carries still its own worth, though under a deformed body and ragged garments The Jews would not willingly tread on the smallest piece of paper in their way, but took it up, for possibly, said they the name of God may be on it Trample not on any, there may be some work of grace there that thou knowest not of The name of God may be written on that soul that thou treadest on, it may be a soul that Christ thought so much of as to give His precious blood for it, therefore despise it not"

To support our view that true liberty, equality, and fraternity can spring only from Christian soil, let us quote a striking passage from the work of a very able writer who could appreciate well the moral and spiritual forces that enter into the history of men In his *History of the English people*, Mr Green thus sums up his estimate of the social influence of Puritanism —

"Puritanism gave a noble gift to society at large in its conception of social equality Their common calling, their common brotherhood in Christ annihilated in the minds of the Puritans that overpowering sense of social distinction which characterized the age of Elizabeth There was no open break with social

* *Commentary*, 1 Peter ii 17

traditions, no open revolt against the social subordination of class to class. But within these forms of the older world, bent for the first time the spirit that was to characterize the new. The meanest peasant felt himself ennobled as a child of God. The proudest noble recognized a spiritual equality in the meanest 'saint'. The great social revolution of the civil wars and the protectorate was already felt in the demeanour of English gentlemen. 'He had a loving and sweet courtesy to the poorest' we are told of one of them, 'and would often employ many spare hours with the commonest soldiers and poorest labourers'. 'He never disdained the meanest, nor flattered the greatest'. But it was felt even more in the new dignity and self-respect with which the consciousness of their 'calling' invested the classes beneath the rank of gentry. Take such a portrait as that which a turner in Eastcheap, Nehemiah Wallington, has left us of a London housewife, his mother. 'She was very loving,' he says, 'and obedient to her parents, loving and kind to her husband, very tendered heaved to her children, loving all that was godly, much disliking the wicked and profane. She was a pattern of sobriety unto many, very seldom seen abroad, except at church, when others recreated themselves at holidays and other times she would take her needlework and say, 'Here is my recreation' '"*

2 If now we think *social duties*, are they not fully recognised in the New Testament? Does it not rest, as on a great granite floor, on the weighty matters of the law, "judgment, mercy, and faith?" "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, *for we are members one of another*" "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph. iv 25, 28) "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii 8) "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (James, v 4)

As to the habits of life by which one is enabled to fulfil one's obligations to society, we find *industry* enjoined, busybodies at Thessalonica, who were above working with their hands, rebuked, and the rule laid down, "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thess. iii 10). We are to remember our obligation to work for others. "If any provide not for his

* *History of the English People*, III

own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (2 Tim v 8) *Self-control* is not only enjoined, but linked to the most powerful and persuasive of all Christian experiences "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii 11-14)

3 Lastly, the Gospel is a great nursery of those *social graces* which give to communities their brightest bloom and highest beauty

"I have always been of opinion" says M^r de Liefde, in his preface to *The Charities of Europe* "that nowhere could a better proof of the divine origin of Christianity, and of the truth of the Gospel be found, than in the story simply told, of some charitable institutions. Whatever the Christian religion may apparently have, in common with other religions, this much is certain, that true, self-denying charity, which seeks the lost, loves the poor, and consoles the sufferer, is exclusively its own"

That beautiful type of character, of which we have very noble samples in men like John Howard and Stephen Grellet, in missionaries like Williams and Moffat, and in ladies like Elizabeth Fry and Agnes Jones, has shown abundantly the vital connexion of faith and philanthropy. Lives of Christian faith cannot but be followed by labours of Christian love. The Christian spirit is not the spirit of the priest and the Levite, but of the good Samaritan. By a kind of instinct we claim the name of Christian to denote the character of every enterprise that seeks the rescue of the lost, the recovery of the infirm, the comfort of the wretched. The love of Christ furnishes the impelling motive, and the sense of obligation to Christ sustains the unwearied devotion that turns work however repulsive into an interesting and delightful occupation, for service is done to Christ when it is done to His poor

and needy ones, and it is certain that not even a cup of cold water, given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall in any wise lose its reward. However degrading in outward respects such work may be, in Christian eyes it is exalted and noble, for in such service we join hands with Him who came to seek and to save the lost, and when we succeed, we join hearts and voices with the angels, and share the joy there is in heaven over the sinner that repenteth.

This brief survey of Bible teachings, principal and subordinate, may suffice to show that while ample provision is made for the main purpose for which Revelation is given, namely, the remedy of man's rupture with God, it contains numberless other adaptations to the varied nature with which he has been endowed. It serves to build up the fallen tabernacle of humanity, and it helps that process of social development towards higher things which would probably have gone on in the history of the race, if no disturbance had occurred. The primal contact of the divine with the human, besides wonderfully advancing the individual, would have done much to advance the race to new heights of intellectual, moral, and social life. By restoring this contact of the divine and the human, Christianity has again made this progress possible. "Onward and upward" may thus be our motto to the end of time.

CLAIM OF CHRIST ON THE CONSCIENCE.

I

MY subject is The Claim of Christ on the Conscience, and if I am to carry my readers with me in what follows, we must have a common starting-point where all agree. That, I think, will be found in this proposition — That every man is bound to do what he perceives or conscientiously believes to be right. If we acknowledge the reality of moral obligation at all — and I am sure all who read this do so — none will refuse assent to the proposition I have just stated. It will be observed that I do not say every man is bound to do what is right, for that although true, might remain a very barren and unpractical truth, as the question would still remain — “What is right?” and this it might be impossible for us to agree upon, at least, we should probably have the very greatest difficulty in doing so.

But the principle I have stated is a much more manageable one, and enables us to avoid a great many controversies — “Every man is bound to do what he perceives or conscientiously believes to be right.” To some of my readers, perhaps, this proposition may have a somewhat suspicious sound, as if it left every man to determine for himself what is right, as if, accordingly, there were no objective right, no right in the nature of things, no right above and beyond man to determine his action instead of his determining what right is.

Now, I do not mean that there is no objective right. I hold very strongly that there is a right eternal as God himself and firm as the deep foundations of the universe, but if a man is to do the right, he must see it, it must be revealed to him, or, to speak in philosophical language, the objective must become subjective. But because it becomes subjective, it does not follow that there is not the objective reality, on the contrary,

without the latter I do not see, in spite of all the elaborate explanations of some philosophers as to how something comes out of nothing, how the former could exist. When a man has eyes and honestly looks with them, I believe he sees realities and not phantoms, and therefore the proposition is a perfectly safe one, as well as the only practical one, that every man is bound to do what he sees to be right.

II

I go a step further, in which I think all will accompany me, and say that every man is bound to do the *highest* right which he sees, or to put it in perhaps a better form *Every man is bound to obey his own highest impulse*. Very often duty presents itself in a comparative or relative shape. We are placed in certain circumstances where we are called upon to act—two or three courses are open to us, any one of which may appear right or at least not wrong—which are we to adopt? I say, a man is bound to choose what conscience declares to be the best, the highest, the noblest alternative—to obey what he feels in the circumstances to be his highest impulse.

Suppose a case. You meet with some misfortune, and are in pecuniary and other difficulties. An acquaintance, who is under no special obligation to you, comes generously to your aid. He gives you his sympathy, his time, his counsel, pays your debts, lifts you out of your straits, and enables you to start afresh. For all this he takes no bond or promise from you, having in his generosity simply helped you according to your need. By and by he gets into trouble himself, is unfortunate in business, and to extricate himself in an hour of temptation commits the crime of forgery. When you first hear of his difficulties, he is a criminal in prison awaiting his trial. What are you, whom he helped, now to do for him? He holds no bond of yours, you are not very wealthy, have not much more than suffices for your own and your family's comfort, it will not favour your public reputation if you profess yourself the friend of a forger, and especially own that

you were once under deep obligations to him. And he is a criminal—ought you not to leave him to the tender mercies of the law? Still he once helped you, actually paid a considerable sum of money for you—a sum which, if he had now, might do much for himself or his family. Well, you will pay back that, you will send it to him quietly or to his family, but you will not compromise yourself further, it might give you trouble, it might create suspicion, too heavy demands might be made upon you if you offered your help. Still the thought suggests itself that he did not so deal with you, he did not merely give you a particular sum, he gave you what you needed, he helped you in other ways just as you needed, should you not now deal as generously with him? Should you not now, regardless of consequences to yourself, interpose on his behalf? And by your sympathy as a friend, by your money, your counsel, your influence, help him *in every way that is right* as far as you possibly can? You feel in your conscience that the last would be the noblest thing to do. You perceive clearly enough that if you are to obey your own highest impulse and be true to your highest nature, you ought to help in a generous, self-sacrificing spirit your unfortunate and guilty friend.

Now, I say, when a man clearly sees the nobler path, his plain duty is to choose the best, to yield to the highest prompting of conscience. Men may have no right to blame him if he acted otherwise. A different course of action might not be objectively wrong, but for him, he fails and stumbles as a moral being unless he obeys the noblest impulse. By acting otherwise he gives a wound to his conscience, and injures his own moral health. He chooses the lower when the higher is presented to him, and he has to pay the penalty in a less sensitive moral nature, and dimmer moral perceptions. The next time he will not be able to perceive the best so clearly, nor have so much of the will or the power to follow it. Every one is bound, if he is to be a true man, a good man, a really moral man, to obey his own highest impulse. Thus

only will he advance in the knowledge of what is right and good, and in the inclination and the strength to follow after it

III

BUT, *thirdly*, I take another step, and say that every man is bound to obey his own highest impulse *at all costs*. When a man perceives clearly the thing which is right *for him*, the obligation to do it is absolute. In discharging that obligation, he may have to toil, to struggle, to suffer, or even to die, still, if there is any reality in duty at all, if right and wrong be not a mere matter of convenience or pleasure, either in the objective or subjective sense of the word, all that must be endured, because the obligation is absolute. You cannot stop short of this conclusion, unless by denying the reality of duty altogether. It does not alter the obligation that a man may be mistaken in what seems to him right, it may appear to some an absurdity or even a piece of presumption that a man should die for what may, after all, turn out to be a mistake, no matter, the obligation remains all the same, because the only way in which a man can ever attain to the knowledge of what is right and found himself upon it, is by following at all hazards what, after all honest and conscientious inquiry, reveals itself to him as right. It may, perhaps, seem to some that Christianity, or, let me rather say, Jesus Christ, makes very hard or even impossible demands upon men, when they read in the New Testament such a passage as this

“ If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple ” *

The claim is, no doubt, a very high one, but the truth is, *every law of righteousness makes the same demand*. It is just the expression of the claim of duty. If there is such a thing as right and wrong in

* Luke xiv 26, 27

the world, if moral obligation has any reality in it, then we *must* do what is right—we must be faithful to what is good and true at all hazards, we must not swerve from the righteous way, though father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters be all against us. We must break with them, oppose them, cut ourselves off from them, rather than break with duty, rather than resist truth, rather than do what we clearly perceive to be wrong. We must be willing even to take up our cross if we cannot otherwise pursue the path of duty, that is, we must be willing to give up our life, to die, and that by the most cruel and shameful death, rather than swerve from what we perceive to be the path of righteousness. If there is any absolute right in the world, that is its inflexible claim.

I

Now, if this is admitted—and I have little doubt the conscience of all will respond to the truth of what I have said—I wish to advance a step further, and to show that this claim which the right, the good, the highest lays upon us is the claim of Jesus.

This of course, follows at once if Jesus Christ be, as I believe Him to be, the very embodiment of good, the incarnation of all righteousness, and truth, and excellence, the living manifestation of the highest life, the divine life, in which is all good. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, in a sense in which no other is the Son of God, the only begotten and perfect Son, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His Person, then He embodies the highest good, for there can be no good apart from Him, since He is one with the very fountain and origin of goodness—God who is good, and besides whom there is none.

But at present I cannot take this for granted, and I do not wish to make assumptions, my argument is good only if it rightfully claims assent at every step. Now, it will be remembered that in setting out we started with the proposition that a man is bound to follow that which he perceives to be right, which he recognises as the best and highest. This claim I can

at once identify with the claim of Jesus, if you acknowledge, what I think is now generally acknowledged by men of candid minds and enlightened consciences, that of those who have ever lived on earth, Jesus Christ is the most perfect Being we have ever heard of, or read of, or conceived of, the fullest embodiment of virtue, the manifestation in character and in action of the best and highest morality ever imagined

Most sceptics even will admit this, men who refuse fully to accept Christianity or to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ, admire and reverence His perfect morality, and acknowledge Him to be, ethically, unapproachable among men. This acknowledgment is enough for my present purpose, I do not ask any now to decide whether He be the Son of God or not, we leave that aside in the meantime. I am content with the admission that He is the most perfect of the sons of men, the manifestation of the best and highest good that has ever yet been conceived of. Then His claim is that of the best and highest upon us, as we are bound at all costs by the fundamental moral law, the first dictates of a living conscience, to obey our own highest impulse, then the obligation lies upon us to follow Him whom we acknowledge to be the best and highest, to yield Him allegiance as our leader, as our moral King, until we have found a better or a nobler.

Let me here call in as a witness to the rightfulness of this claim a man certainly not partial to Christianity—John Stuart Mill. In one of the last pages he ever wrote he thus speaks of Christ:

“Whatever else may be taken from us by rational criticism Christ is still left, a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. Who among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospel? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncracies were of a totally different

sort, still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was ill derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source. About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision when something very different was aimed at, must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity, nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life. When to this we add that, to the conception of the rational sceptic, it remains a possibility that Christ actually was what He supposed Himself to be—a man charged with a special, express and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue, we may well conclude that the influences of religion on the character, which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving, and that what they lack of direct strength as compared with those of a firmer belief is more than compensated by the greater truth and rectitude of the morality they sanction."

In this very remarkable passage it will be observed that Mill acknowledges that "even now it would not be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." These words plainly imply that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the highest virtue the world has seen or framed in imagination, that even now not even the unbeliever can find a better rule than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life. If then He thus reveals the best and highest—manifests it not merely in word, but in action, in His life and deepest personality without a flaw and without a stain that man can detect, so that He judges all, but is Himself judged of no man,—on what ground can we refuse to follow Him, to take Him as our moral Captain and King, until at least we have found a better

and a worthier ? For Jesus is a centre of moral light, the purest and the fullest that shines in the earth. By His entrance into human history He has breathed among men a new moral atmosphere, created a new ethical standard, and quickened the consciences of men to strive after it. No one can say that this light does not shine for him. For Jesus meets men on the level of the deepest and broadest humanity. There is nothing in Him of the narrowness of class, or nation, or age, He stands clear from the prejudices and limitations of His people and His time, He vindicates for Himself the name which He assumed—the Son of Man. He is therefore a guide and leader for all. Not even in idea are we yet able to frame a nobler pattern of humanity than Jesus—not are we ever likely to be able. Although it is well nigh nineteen centuries since Jesus lived on earth, and nearly as many since the Gospels were written, His light shines as high above men as it ever did, nay, higher, as men under His influence grow better able to appreciate His brightness. The noblest characters in fiction own their nobility to features borrowed from Him, and yet how far short do they fall of their Archetype ? Take, for example, Tennyson's *King Arthur*—his “own ideal knight,” and what is he but a partial reflection of the true King of men. The perfect light in truth with which Jesus shines is not of earth, but of heaven, not human, but divine.

Now here is the solemn consideration for us—if, when Jesus is thus revealed to us, when our whole moral nature recognises Him as the best and noblest, as the perfectly righteous and pure and holy One, and responds to the innate authority of His Word, His example, His Person, if we yet refuse Him allegiance and turn away from Him then we turn away from righteousness, we refuse to pursue the highest excellence, we violate our own moral nature, and break its first and fundamental law. To acknowledge Jesus as the best and noblest, to see in Him the embodiment of incomparable virtue, and yet to say—I will not acknowledge

Him as my King, I will not own Him as Lord of my conscience, I will not receive His Word, His example, His Spirit, as the law and guide of my life, is deliberately to decline from virtue, to take a path lower than the highest, to choose the worse when the better was within our reach, inviting us, claiming us,—can we say that we are guiltless if we do so, or that we do not deserve the penalty that must necessarily fall upon a soul who loved something else better than righteousness?

II

BUT now let me speak of another, and, if possible, a more blessed claim of Christ upon us. He appeals not merely to the sense of duty, but to the consciousness of moral weakness. Christ is not merely the embodiment of the best and highest virtue, laying an obligation on our consciences to own His authority and follow Him, but also a fountain of moral strength to weak and erring men, inspiring them with the will and the power to be virtuous, making them aspire after righteousness and purity and moral excellence, and enabling them also to realize it.

We have seen that when Jesus Christ calls upon men to renounce all, if it be necessary, in order to follow Him, to take up the cross and come after Him, to be willing to part with father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children, yea, and our very lives in order to be His disciples, He is really laying no heavier claim upon us than is laid by every law of righteousness, to follow the right, however manifested, demands the very same sacrifices, if there be any reality in moral obligation at all, and any meaning and purpose in life, for if we have nothing worth dying for, we have nothing worth living for, the true man must be willing to be a martyr, should circumstances demand it, if he believes in righteousness and goodness at all. The man who refuses to go that length negatives the whole of morality—denies, in fact, the existence of morality in any proper sense altogether.

Now I wish to point out what a blessed and gracious thing it is for us men, that not an abstract morality, not a cold and austere authority, but a living, breathing, loving Person lays the obligation upon us, so that the claim becomes an invitation, and the call to duty an offer of all needed help. Our King of Righteousness, the Lord of our conscience, does not issue His command, giving bald directions about the way, and saying, Go, but He says, Come, come after Me, put your hand in Mine and let Me lead you on. Hear His own words —

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”*

Can it be denied that if Jesus gives rest even under the yoke of duty, and makes it easy to meet even the severe claim of righteousness, we find in Him help and strength which are to be found nowhere else?

Let us try to see a little in detail how this is so. What we are now seeking for, as, indeed, what we all especially need, is the will and the power to be and to do what is right, the inward impulse and strength to steadfastly follow after and attain righteousness and goodness. We are not now inquiring as to what is right, or how we come to discern it. But suppose we know it, how are we to do it? We are all conscious that we fail in righteousness and in goodness, not so much because we are perplexed about what is right, as because we do not faithfully perform what we know to be our duty. I do not say that it is never hard to know the right course, that we are never perplexed about the path of duty, but I am sure all will agree with me that the world would be infinitely better than it is if men only faithfully walked up to their own standard. We are so weak, so liable to be led astray, so inclined to yield to temptation, that we are constantly stumbling and falling even in a path

which we have seen very plainly Every honest conscience must put its signature to the truth of our Lord's words —

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil"*

In our better moments, when the spirit is alive and the conscience awake, we see the ideal bright above us, beckoning us upward, and we feel that to gain that height would be worth any amount of toil and conflict But we have hardly formed the resolution and begun the effort, when lower impulses assert their force, the spiritual light in the conscience grows dim, the ideal is obscured, and we decline from the path with the bright goal at the end of it In the gloom which ensues, doubts are apt to arise as to the value of any ideal standard, high aspirations seem fond imaginings it appears safer and more sensible to be content with a lower plane of living and a nearer goal The standard which in an exalted moment commended itself to the living conscience is given up for the ordinary level of principle and conduct which is current in the society in which one moves Most are so weak, in fact, that they are unable to follow the higher impulses which at times they feel; to do so demands more moral strength than they can command The highest goal is not that which most are seeking to press toward it implies making a path for oneself, or at least renouncing the companionship of the majority, and the loss of that companionship is what few are strong enough to sacrifice

Most, therefore, are content to go just as their neighbours go, and to adopt the current standard, which is certainly not an ideal one Yet the ideal does recur at times, flashing its light anew into the conscience, and making the man ill at ease with himself For it is few who attempt to justify to

* 1 John iii, 19

themselves an un-ideal standard—who deliberately avow a selfish, worldly, material view of life. Such theories are not wanting, indeed, they are to be found under the patronage of so-called art and science and philosophy, attempting to justify the dominance of fleshly and sensual impulses. But most approve the better, even while they follow the worse. What they want is moral power. What an all-important question, then, it is to you—Whence is this moral power to come? I believe I can point you to the best and the only sufficient fountain of it.

It is unnecessary to dilate on the superiority of the concrete over the abstract, of life over logic, of example over precept or reasoning. In the last case the advantage has become proverbial. Even in matters which men are acquainted with, and where precept would be sufficient to direct, we know how weak it is when example counteracts, and how infectious and irresistible the latter is even in the face of the plainest prohibitions. A parent or a master may give the most approved advice, may be lavish of the best exhortations and prudent counsels, but if his own conduct runs counter to his precepts, there cannot be a doubt which will have the most influence over the child. If one wishes to learn an art it would be folly to sit down to a book of rules—the tyro must be placed under the guidance of an expert.

“The eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master and the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress”*

In things of which men are ignorant, bare directions would produce only misunderstanding, and misunderstanding would result in abortive failure. Let the regulations be drawn up with elaborate minuteness, and they will only the more mislead and bewilder, until the learner throws up the work in despair. Now morality is an art, the art of living well is living a righteous, a true, and a noble life.

* Psalm cxxxiii, 2

How are we to attain to this art—an art, alas ! so hard to practise For we are in the midst of a world which, taken as a whole, will not help, but hinder us Men, it is true, profess to be practising this art in one way or other, but if we have formed to ourselves any ideal of what a righteous, a virtuous, a noble life worthy of the name should be, we must own that the vast majority are but sad blunderers in the art With most, life seems to be a mere competition, a struggle, if not to live, yet to lay hold for self of as many of the good things of this world as by strength or skill or cunning one can attain The man most successful in this seems to be an able, prudent, or wise man—a man to be considerably respected and admired, if not envied If we throw ourselves into the battle of life in this spirit, the tendency is more and more to place one in the attitude for fighting for self alone, sympathy with one's fellows, generous emotions, acts of kindness, may be good in their way, may help to hide the ugliness, and even add to the happiness of life, but they cannot be indulged too far, they must not interfere with the main chance, when the crisis comes a man must look to himself and let other considerations go

Now, if this is the prevalent spirit, if this is the art of living that obtains most largely in the world, it is evident that the ideal is not high, that the principle of following the best and noblest is not dominant, and that the man who aims at the latter will have the temper of the world against him, and not for him

But there is something more to contend with than even this prudent, selfish, ungenerous tone—there is the whole animal nature, the promptings of evil passions, the seductive allurements of vice—all the temptations of the world without, appealing to the baser tendencies within, and conspiring to drag men down into the mire and corruption of sensual indulgence and vicious pleasure Now, suppose we have all this against us, and nothing to uphold us except the cold intellectual conceptions of an abstract virtue,

the stern prohibitions of bare authority, or even the protesting voice of conscience—the categorical imperative of a moral law within—can we feel strong enough to stand against the current of the whole custom and fashion of the world, as well as the winds and gusts of tempestuous passion that sweep across the soul, and make a wreck of every noble resolution and aspiring virtue?

Those who have studied morals philosophically know how hard it seems to find a sure foundation for virtue at all, how some teachers of repute lay down principles which seem to give the reins to inclination and let it carry men whither it will. Suppose, however, that by hard reasoning the conclusion has been reached that on the whole virtue is good and vice is evil, and justice is better than injustice, that the probabilities are in favour of the old-fashioned morality—can it be supposed that men are well armed in the hour of temptation against the assaults of passion and the seductions of opportunity by such lame and impotent conclusions as these, not to speak of being prepared to struggle upwards and onwards to ideal heights of virtue of which we catch a glimpse in the highest moments of our life? Who does not want a stronger, a more abiding, a more inspiring power than the voice of mere authority or the dictate of an abstract rule would ever give?

If I wished to ensure a young man's standing against temptation, much more his living a pure and noble life, I would send him forth, not so much with an abstract code of morals, or the cold commands of a superior will, as with the ideal in his heart of a noble father and a pure mother, the very thought of whose presence would be a continual guide and inspiration to him—would warn him off dangerous shoals and rocks, and beckon him onward in the paths of virtue and goodness and all excellence. Their example, and the reflection as to what they would think or say or do in any circumstances would have infinitely more power with any human heart than the completest and

best-reasoned system of ethics It is under the deep sense of this that the poet exclaims —

"Away, haunt not thou me,
Thou vain Philosophy !
Little hast thou bestend,
Sive to perplex the head
And leave the spirit dead
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
While from the secret treasure-depths below,
Fed by the skiey shower
And clouds that sink and rest on hill-tops high.
Wisdom at once and power
Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly ?
* * * * *

Why labour at the dull mechanic art,
When the fresh breeze is blowing
And the strong current flowing
Right onward to the eternal shore ?"

Yes, it is the fresh breeze we need, the inspiration of a living spirit breathing upon our spirits, if we are to aspire to true excellence, and be saved from sinking in the sloughs of vice, or from being enslaved by the dead customs and narrowing selfishness of the world. We must have an ideal, combining all we can conceive of as truly good and noble, and this ideal embodied in a living reality to give it surety and substantiality, to make it really a power over our hearts and our imitation of it a possibility. Sometimes we may find such a model and inspire among those we know—some fellow-man, a relative, a friend, who seems to combine in himself all excellence, and to realize our ideal. While he is this to us, we cannot help following him, imitating him, making him our standard, our universal reference.

But unfortunately, in the case of any ordinary brother-man, the inspiration cannot last. Under his leadership and influence we advance, our thoughts expand, our moral perceptions grow clearer and higher, and the first result is that we discover the defects of our model. Some side of our nature he does not respond to, it may be merely a limitation, but on that side he cannot carry us on, he cannot help us. We

look a little closer, and some flaw even appears—some stain of wrong, of selfishness, of unfairness, some base alloy in that which was to us as pure gold. It may not be much, there may still remain all of nobility we formerly admired, but we see that we expected too much, and that no ordinary brother-man can ever be a never-failing fountain of wisdom and strength to us.

But this One can be—One, who is a brother-man, the nearest and most humane of men, and yet no ordinary brother-man, so that while He meets all our weakness and need, He communicates only help and strength. This man is Christ Jesus. He is a never-failing fountain of moral strength and inspiration, because three things meet in Him, which make Him complete on every side.

First, *He presents to us a character of perfect righteousness*, He realizes the ideal of perfect goodness, purity, and nobility. Look at him in whatever light one may, one can find no flaw, no taint, no shortcoming in Him. See how He fulfilled that fundamental moral law with which we set out—of following at all costs the right, the highest. He had just one purpose on earth, to do the will of God, and that purpose He pursued without swerving and without faltering. Straight forward He went in the right path without turning to the right hand or to the left, although He was assailed and tempted on every side. What a narrow, hard, and thorny way it proved? As he pursued, at all costs, the one object of doing God's will, He had to renounce one thing after another of all that is dear to men—not arbitrarily, not from any self-willed asceticism, but just as duty called Him, just as it was necessary for the fulfilment of His life's purpose. Comfort, home, friends, peace, the respect of His fellow-men, honour, reputation, character, life itself, all He was stripped of, and instead He put on shame, injustice, suffering, bodily anguish and mental agony, until at last, under scorn and cruelty He suffered a malefactor's death on the shameful cross,

Why? Just because He would, at all costs, without reserve and compromise, do the will of God. And so

perfect, so high, so noble was His righteousness, that though it is more than eighteen centuries since His short life came to that sad end, though the thoughts of men have widened, and then moral ideas and perceptions have cleared and heightened in a remarkable measure, chiefly through His influence, that character and that life stand as far above as ever—nay, further as the stars seen from the mountain tops appear much higher than when viewed from the plain. As man's ideal rises, that reality shines out brighter, clearer, more attractive, and more unattainable, than ever. It is the noblest man who most feel its power, and acknowledge its transcendent, its divine excellence. It wins even the unwilling homage of those who scan it closely to discover, if they can, spots that mar it. That living personality becomes more and more the centre of influence, and the cynosure of every eye as the centuries roll on. He embodies a righteousness not merely human but Divine.

Notice, as a second point, although it is, of course bound up with His perfect righteousness, *His entire unselfishness*. This is a very noteworthy element, as it gives infinite worth, and beauty, and power to His goodness. We know how in our fellow-men, even the very best and noblest of them, there comes a point where self intrudes, exercises a disturbing influence, obscures the perfect clearness of an unbiassed judgment, distorts and disturbs somewhat the absolute justice and serenity of unsullied righteousness and truth. Self, which can never be quite overcome in ordinary men, always adds a petty element, a base alloy, to the pure gold of virtuous excellence.

In Jesus Christ no such marting element is found. Selfishness in any form, of pride or partiality to self, or feigned humility, or desire of honour, is not found in Him. His noble declarations regarding Himself, His assertion of his own peculiar greatness, and His unique relation to God, are as entirely free from selfish bias, as the meekest words He ever spoke. His independence, his courage, His unflinching heroism

are as much the outcome of His humility, as his submission to ill treatment, contempt, and cruelty. He can be judge in His own cause with as perfect serenity and absence of prejudice as if it had nothing to do with Him. Therefore He has proved Himself worthy to be King and Judge of all the world, and God has exalted Him to be so. Thus His influence never wanes, there is no weak point in all His being, His voice is ever strong in the power of perfect truth, His example ever a standard, an unapproachable and yet an attractive ideal, a glorious light before the eyes of men to lift them above the world, to inspire them with the love of heavenly purity, to show them the way, and draw them on.

But *thirdly*, this perfect righteousness, and unselfishness are combined with *an infinite and unconquerable love to men*. Here is the third wonderful strand of the threefold cord which has been twined to bind the heart of man to righteousness and goodness, and which can never be broken. We can conceive of a perfect righteousness pure and serene, but far away and cold, still exercising a wonderful influence, and drawing men upwards by the attraction of its excellence. Such a revelation of perfect virtue in a real character might exert a powerful influence, and inspire men with new strength by its pure light, even although it had no warmth of personal relationship. Or, on the other hand, we can easily conceive of a powerful loving nature, drawing man irresistibly to it and swaying and moulding them, even though it were not a perfectly righteous nature—nay, had even many defects. How can we estimate, then, the winning, subduing, inspiring power of a character and a personality—a living, breathing, kindly fellowman, though so far above men,—who combines perfect righteousness and inexhaustible, an conquerable love?

The life of Jesus was not more entirely a life devoted to the doing of the will of God than it was a life devoted to the highest welfare of mankind. And it was just as hard and difficult to pursue the latter as the former.

The conduct of men to Him was such that it might well have killed all love and all regard in Him towards His kind, for while He made Himself one with them, their coldness, then injustice, their ingratitude, their scorn, then cruelty were enough to have worn out and extinguished all but an infinite love

But His love was infinite, unfailing, a love stronger than death. So mighty was it that it led Him to stoop to man's utter need to take up the burden of the world's evil, to yield Himself as a sacrifice for man's sin on the cross of shame and death. And, therefore, that love has a power in it which can never die, and will melt and subdue and bind the hearts of men to Him to all eternity. There was no might like that of love. Love wins love, and when once this noblest passion has lodged in the heart it transforms and glorifies the whole nature, it makes the coward brave, the mean man noble, the stammerer eloquent, the churl generous, the selfish man a hero in self-sacrifice, it rouses the dull, makes the wavering steadfast, elevates the ignoble, purifies the gross fleshly nature as with a divine fire. Oh! what will not the human heart do under the influence of love, what will it not attain to if only the object of it is pure and noble! But Jesus Christ, who by His infinite sacrifice of love wins the love of men, is the perfectly pure and noble, the embodiment of all excellence. In binding men to Himself, He binds them to all that is just and good, and pure and true. He makes in His own living Person perfect righteousness an object of the deepest love. Thus He makes men enthusiasts in virtue, inspires them with the ravishing love of goodness, gives them at once the will and the power to follow after it, and step by step to attain to it. Said I not truly that Jesus Christ is an unfailing fountain of moral power?

But let me proceed a little further this influence which Jesus Christ exerts upon men, which passes from His heart to our hearts, from His Spirit to our spirits, is an influence that never grows weaker. It is more felt now than ever it was. But this is

not the case with the influence of ordinary men. the greatest figures, with the exception of this may not grow smaller in the view of lengthening posterity but more limited, more partial. If their excellencies are seen more clearly, then faults are also more apparent, and hence their influence at the best is but small. But the influence of Jesus both widens and deepens, gathers in strength and volume as the ages unfold themselves. Why is this? It is not only the perfection of His character, but because His influence is not a mere influence. What comes from Him a breathing, living, power, is a living Divine Spirit from a living human and Divine person. For if my argument has been followed with assenting conscience, the reader will hardly stumble now at the idea that Jesus not only was a pure and perfect man, but was and is the Divine Son of God. There is no accounting for such a personality as His but on this ground. His spotless character, His perfect righteousness, His lowly inexhaustible love are not human, but Divine. The Gospel history is an insoluble riddle and a contradiction unless we accept the plain account it gives of Jesus, as One who came from God and went to God. So He not only has lived on earth, but lives in heaven and it is from Jesus in the power of His heavenly life that the Spirit proceeds. It is therefore, mighty, and pure and patient, and loving as Jesus was on earth—nay, as He is, and God is in heaven. Man's spirit is but weak and failing, even in the strongest, but the Spirit that flows from the risen Lord is the Paraclete, the "other Comforter," whom He promised to send to His disciple, when He should "go to the Father." Thus the influence that flows from Jesus is the operation of an omnipotent Spirit.

III

Let me present one other very important and practical truth. Perhaps some of my readers may feel that Jesus Christ could help them, if once they got into personal relation with Him, if they were only started on the path of righteousness, and were *with* Jesus instead

of *against* Him But they feel that the past puts a great barrier in the way, that sin and guilt lie heavy upon them, so that they cannot even enter on the Christian course But Jesus can say to sin-laden souls now, even as he did in the days of His flesh "Be of good cheer, thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." The first thing He does for a burdened soul that seeks His help is to lift off the heavy burden and cast it, as it were, into the depths of the sea He has power to forgive sins, for by His perfect sacrifice of himself He has made atonement for sin, so that the believing soul may at once start in the full consciousness of freedom which Divine forgiveness gives Is it asked, how Jesus has the right to speak the word of forgiveness, and to cancel the guilty past

Look fairly at the experience He passed through, and I think the answer will be found The Gospel of St John says "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" and when we look, it is the image of a sacrificial Lamb which He presents For He is innocent and yet afflicted He is sinless and yet a sufferer, Nay, more, He is afflicted *because* He is innocent He is a sufferer *because* He is sinless, That was the actual experience of His earthly life The more faithful He is to God, and the more He spends Himself for men, the deeper is He brought into trouble and suffering. It is nothing else than His righteousness that induces his affliction, it is His devotion to the cause of man that brings on Him hatred and persecution. Thus the pure One, because He is pure, suffers as the vilest, the righteous, for nothing but His righteousness, is treated by man as a malefactor, the just is condemned by the unjust, the Holy One is nailed by wicked hands to the accursed tree All righteousness seems overturned, and injustice to have seized the throne of earth In literal fact the innocent occupies the place of the guilty, the lot of the vilest falls on the noblest the hatred of the world is poured on the heart of the loving One the curse of the world's evil rests on the head of the most blessed These are

the facts patent to all who read the story of the Gospels

Now the question is, What is the explanation of these facts? Is it all a dark fate and an inexplicable destiny? Was Jesus only crushed by the non wheel of an evil universe, which no controlling hand guides, and no gracious purpose animates? It is manifest that He Himself did not for a moment think so. For He goes forward to meet the cross with His eyes open, He bends His back to the burden willingly, when the bitter cup is put into His hand, He takes it as from the hand of a righteous and loving Father, saying "Not My will but Thine be done!" He dies neither as a weakling, unresisting, because helpless, nor yet as a lion at bay defying His murderers to the last, but in calm meekness, in divine self-sacrifice, He yields himself as a lamb to be laid on the altar, in the last hour breathing the prayer of forgiveness even for His murderers. So He gives His pure life a ransom for the guilty, whose place He has taken, because it was the eternal purpose of redeeming Love. Is there any explanation which will suffice but that given by the inspired Words?—

"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"*

Now every sin-burdened soul, looking on that cross may say—"Thou, holy lamb of God, hast taken my place, Thou hast borne my due, Thy heart has been pierced with my sin, and broken with my reproach. Thou hast died where I should have died, and now I live a new life, cleansed by Thy blood, redeemed by Thy sacrifice, quickened by Thy Spirit, for Thy love has won my heart for evermore."

* Isa lxi 5, 6, 2 Cor v 21, John i 29

THE GREAT POWER.

[Under the heading of *Plain Proofs of the Great Facts of Christianity*, the Rev F. R. Wynne M.A. of Dublin, has written a small, simple book full of thought, which we would warmly recommend to young men, whether Christian or non-Christian. It consists of six Lectures to a large and mixed but thoughtful congregation. These are respectively headed—The Great Question, the Great Power, the Great Figure, the Great History, the Great Message, and the Great Literature. The book is published by Messrs Hodder & Stoughton, and may be had for a rupee or less.

Before reproducing here the Lecture headed *The Great Power*, it may be well to premise that while Christianity, as a religion distinct from Judaism, dates only from the beginning of the first century of the Christian Era, as God's means of salvation it dates in plan from all eternity and in practical application to man from the time our first parents were informed, immediately on their fall, of there being salvation for them by returning to God, through Him, the seed of the woman, by whom the evil one's head would be bruised (Gen iii, 15). The events recorded in the first Chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles* took place in the year 30 A.D.—*Ed*]

"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God"—1 Cor i, 24

IT is certain that there existed no such thing as the Christian religion in the year of our era 30. It is certain that a very wide-spread Christian religion existed in the year 64. The heathen historian, Tacitus, describes in graphic language the vast numbers of "this pernicious superstition," as he calls it, who were put to death with horrible cruelty at about that date by the Emperor Nero in Rome.*

* Tacitus, *Ann*, I, 11, c. 44

Letters written by a man named Paul, admitted by unbelievers as well as believers to be genuine documents, dating from about ten years previous, show the same thing, and show that the Christian religion, spread abroad so widely then, was substantially the same as the Christian religion we believe in now,

Whatever may have been the *cause*, it is certain, therefore, that within those few years from A.D. 30 to A.D. 50 a **RESULT** was produced which we call Christianity. We can see to-day what the result is. It remains among us. We can be as sure of its leading characteristics as that "fire burns." We shall consider the result first in order to help us in our investigations as to its cause.

And first we find that, from the darkness of that brief period in the dim far away past, there has issued a **GREAT POWER** whose work we know, whose force we feel. It is certainly a wonderful power for good,—a power which has given to the moral principle within us both clearness and intensity.

One of the earliest records of the nature and spread of Christianity which we have from a non-Christian pen takes notice of this force.

Pliny, the governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, writing to the Emperor Trajan in the beginning of the second century tells him of the vast number of Christians there were in his district, and asks his directions as to the course of conduct he should pursue towards them. From the confessions of those who had been accused and had recanted, he gathers the following description of their practice: "they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and to sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ, as a god, and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft or robbery or adultery, never to falsify their word nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it." * Thus even non-Christian

* C. Plinius, *Traiano Imp.* S, lib. 10, ep. xcvii, Laidner's translation, vii 22

accounts, extorted from renegades by fear of death and torture, show us, from the first, Christianity as a force making for righteousness

1 Very remarkable is the cleanness with which the religion of Jesus of Nazareth has always pressed upon man the difference between right and wrong. It brought into prominence a large class of virtues and graces whose obligations had not been felt before and whose beauty had hardly been recognised.

Meekness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance, may have adorned individual lives in all times, but with Christianity they first stood out before the world as noble objects to aim at. Neither Greek nor Roman heroes, nor oriental devotees, were ever painted as meek and lowly in heart. Such painting would have had no beauty in the eyes of beholders.

The sacredness of truth, too, the obligation of witnessing to inward convictions even unto death, came to be recognised as a holy duty with the new force we are considering. Many causes have had their martyrs, but the first martyrs for *truth* were disciples of Jesus.

'One lesson,' writes the thoughtful author of 'The Restoration of Belief,' "which remained to be brought out and to be wrought into the hearts of men, was the Religious obligation of Belief. Until this generative principle should be worked out as an axiom in morals, nothing could be hoped for as to the destinies of the human family. Have we sufficiently regarded the fact that this great problem was solved for us by the martyr church of the century and a half in prospect?"*

So clear has been the Christian code of morals, that the keenest and most far-seeing thinkers, even of modern times, have acknowledged every duty enforced by it as in the long run conducive of "the greatest happiness to the greatest numbers," and have been able

* Isaac Taylor's "Restoration of Belief" p 75

to suggest no principle of right which is not contained or involved in it. An ideal of goodness was held up for men's admiration and intimation by the first preachers of the Gospel. the widest reaching modern speculations have recognised its perfection, its moral standard has never been improved upon.

2 This code so clear, this ideal so beautiful, has spread its influence over all kinds of people, of all nations and races, of all degrees of barbarism or education. Like that pale messenger whose terrors it has so much diminished, the moral power of Christ's religion makes its presence felt impartially in the palaces of princes and in the huts of the poor. While philosophers are wearying themselves to find a satisfactory basis of morals, while every theory they lay down still leaves the imperative "*I ought*" among the unexplained mysteries of mind, the Christian child finds its clear code and its intelligible basis of morals in the simple yet deeply searching questions, "What would Jesus do? What would Jesus wish?"

3 The *intensity* of the power is as remarkable as its clearness. It not only lays down the lines on which noble life should run, but supplies the motive impulse. It makes man say not only "*I ought*" but "*I will*". It has found out the secret of acting on his complex nature, appealing at the same time to his affections and to his judgment, and rousing wherever it has its legitimate sway a deep *enthusiasm for goodness* which no obstacles can conquer.

4 And not only have we here a *guiding* moral power and an *urgent* moral power, but we have also in a very special way a *remedial* power. "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost" so says one of the early Christian records, and in accordance with this statement has been the influence of the Christian power since. Where prudence has no voice, where punishment only hardens, where all ordinary motives fail to touch the cold dull conscience there the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ comes in as the only helper. How many degraded and ruined

ones have there been, during the eighteen centuries since Jesus of Nazareth, was crucified, who have lifted up their heads from their despair and have roused their wills from sullen torpor, when they have been led to hear the voice of that crucified One saying, "Come unto Me." This is a leading feature of Christianity—prominent now—prominent from the first. It is beautifully pictured in a story attributed by the early Christians to their Founder, in which an alien in race and religion and a foe in politics is described as finding a wounded man by the road side, binding up his wounds and carrying him into safety and comfort. Help to the fallen, the degraded, the miserable, has always been the special work of Christianity. Other systems have suggested means of strengthening habits of good and further elevating the *élite* of the earth. Believers in Jesus Christ have considered themselves bound to go among the "highways and hedges" and bring in to the holy festival the halt, the lame, and the blind. *Remedy*—remedy of moral evil and physical suffering—is the peculiar mission of Christianity.

5 It is necessary for me to speak of the power of *consolation* it has carried with it? The name of "gospel"—"good news"—expresses its best known and most constantly exercised work. The old books I have referred to describe the man Jesus as anointed to "bind up the broken in heart." And amidst the sorrows of humanity, His religion goes forth as the great Consoler. It comforts where every other attempt at comfort seems only a mockery. Long, weary, hopeless pain racks the body, the poor languid eyes still brighten at the thought of Jesus. Friends dearer than life are taken away, hopes are disappointed, affections are blighted, dark shadows seem to blot out all the joys of life. Yet the believer in Jesus lives on, not only submitting, but peaceful and hopeful, "rejoicing in tribulation." The dews of death stand upon the forehead, voices of the nearest and dearest sound strange and far away to the "dying ears," and to the "dying eyes" all earthly objects grow dim, yet

still the smile flickers over the worn face when one Name is whispered, and the white lips murmur "Amen" to the prayer breathed up to Heaven through Him to whom that Name belongs

In speaking thus I am not drawing upon imagination. Who is there among us who has passed middle life that cannot testify to having personally seen the suffering soothed, the sorrowing comforted, the dying strengthened, by the religion of Jesus of Nazareth?

6 The power we are speaking of is chiefly an inward power, pressing on hearts and consciences, but it has manifested itself in a great outward and visible organization which we call the Church of Christ. In spite of divisions and mutual recriminations, we know that there is now spread through the world, and has been since the time of those letters I referred to—about the year 60,—a vast, widely-branching society bound together by faith in one Person, aspiration after one kind of life, and hope of one destiny. I do not speak of how far it has reached its aspirations, or how far it has acted consistently with its creed. We all know how miserable have been its failures, how humiliating its terrible inconsistencies, but there it is, still visible before us—there it has been for centuries—gradually spreading, reaching into further and further domains—gathering in new races of humanity under its influence. The Christian Church, with its various branches, its sacraments, its doctrines, its laws, its ministry, lives, speaks, works, in our midst. We must take it in as a palpable, tangible part of the great result we are trying to estimate.

7 In thinking of the power that has had such sway since the death of Jesus Christ, we must not forget that it has had to make its way against the most tremendous opposition. Though cherished with passionate devotion by its friends, it has been scorned and hated by its enemies. The Jews detested it with fanatical ferocity as the disappointment of their national aspirations and the foe and rival of their national creed. (The story of their bigoted opposition which

we read in the earliest Christian books is only what, from the nature of the case, we might be sure would have occurred) The heathen scorned the new faith as a Jewish superstition, and disliked it as an uncompromising antagonist of the religious Aryan and non-Aryan systems that were looked upon by the upper classes as pleasant and convenient, and by the lower as protecting them from the wrath of the gods. So from all sides the rising power was challenged. It was met by the arguments of the learned, by hatred and sometimes by bloody persecution from the people. The first part of a prophecy attributed to the great Founder has had its fulfilment as certainly as the last "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer—I have overcome the world."

8 One more remark before we put together all that we have seen about the moral and spiritual power which has emerged from the cross and grave of Jesus. Such as it is now, such it was from the first. It has not been a mere nucleus round which the culture and experience of humanity have gradually been collected. It has not been the resultant of a number of latent forces in our nature, which, as the ages went by were brought out one by one, and led to unite in drawing in the same direction. It is not, like civilization, a *growth*—a development. It is a power that has come forth upon the world full grown and fully armed from its birth. What of beauty is there in modern Christianity? what of "sweetness and light," what of heroism and self-sacrifice, that cannot be found as beautifully or more beautifully expressed in the letters of Paul, or those old fragmentary histories which we call gospels? Not a life-giving idea is there, not a motive for righteousness known and felt in the church of the nineteenth century, that was not known and felt in the Church of the first.

Such, then, is the result we have to contemplate. We are not in this depending on the testimony of others: we can observe it ourselves. We have before our very eyes a living Power, clear in its description of elevated morality, strong in its enforcement of it: a

power that for eighteen centuries is acknowledged, by those who do not themselves bow before it to have done more than any known power in existence to ennoble and ameliorate the human race, a power which reaches and reforms the most degraded, which helps, cheers and guides the earnest seeker after goodness, a power which has placed truth on the high pedestal it now occupies, which gives courage to the naturally timid, strength to the weak, comfort to the sorrowful, hope to the despairing, triumphant joy to the dying, a power which has broken through all the barriers of caste, of nationality, of differing languages, mental and physical organisations, life-long habits of thought and action, and has brought to bear on all peoples, nations and languages alike the pressure of one holy ideal of life, love and loyalty to one unseen Person, grateful faith in one grand act of self-sacrifice, and confident expectation of one destiny of joy

This power has been opposed by bloody persecution, yet it has pressed on unchecked. It has been flattered and made much of, and put into false positions by the great ones of the earth, yet it has survived. All things have changed, yet it has not changed. Dynasties have risen and fallen, popular beliefs have waxed and waned, systems of philosophy have flourished and passed away, superstitions have one by one dropped into disuse and been forgotten, civilization has gradually spread with its mingled blessing and curse, but all this time the Christian power has remained unaltered—the same in the direction of its force and the nature of its force, as it was from the beginning, mingling with advancing civilization and helping it, but gaining nothing from it except new opportunities for exercising its primitive qualities. Like the sun, which shines upon the evil and the good, and warms and gladdens each region of the revolving earth, the religion of Jesus has, through these long centuries of

* I might quote passages agreeing with this statement from such writers as J. S. Mill, or Mr. Lecky, the historian of Rationalism.

chequered human history, blessed and enlightened all who came within reach of its influence with the shining of its pure ideas of God, of goodness, and of eternity

How has this power originated? What has been the cause of this result, of which my words have given only a feeble and hasty sketch? We know that a force cannot be in action without receiving its impulse from a force or combination of forces equal to itself. Where is the ulterior force that has put Christianity in motion?

It is certain that its power has issued from the few years before and after the death of Jesus of Nazareth. How could it have originated then? What could have produced in its full strength an engine of such vast moral efficacy? It originated in a conviction about *facts*. A conviction that a certain man had lived a supernatural life, had wrought supernatural acts, had risen again from the dead, had proved Himself to be a manifestation of God and the Saviour of humanity,—in this conviction the Christian power certainly originated. This persuasion (whether right or wrong) that the man Jesus was more than man, that He had done what man could not do, and shown Himself to be what mere man could not be,—this persuasion was, without any manner of doubt, the foundation of Christianity. Here is the foundation. We have only to ask, Is it a foundation of fact or a foundation of delusion? Did the things which the first Christians supposed had taken place really take place, or did they not? If they did, we have a grand cause for a grand effect. It is an adequate cause. There is a correlation between the force we see in action and the force which gave it birth. The effect seems to us beyond all human power, the effect is a signal triumph of good over evil we should expect the cause to be superhuman too we should expect it to be a signal exertion of the "power not ourselves which makes for righteousness." So it is if the gospel story is true. So it is if the disciples were right in their

idea about facts The Divine result we see originated in the Divine interposition we believe in

Only think for a moment of the alternative What a choice we should have! The sublime effect originating in dreams or lies! The power which has ever put devotion to *truth* in the forefront, itself only the offspring of a falsehood! The power which has elevated, comforted, ennobled humanity, the issue of a pious fraud or a pious mistake! We confess ourselves sceptics here Our credulity cannot accept such a cause as the producer of such an effect

The utter inadequacy of any conceivable cause but a Divine cause, the impossibility of any mere human or natural agency in existence at the given time to produce the result we are contemplating, must form the subject of future lectures Meanwhile, I ask you to keep in mind the sublimity and splendour of the "moral miracles" which you see yourselves wrought in the world by Him whom our text calls "Christ, the Power of God"

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS.

IN a distant province of a large empire lived three men of very different characters, yet all three in high positions under their sovereign. Not satisfied with their condition, they joined in a most unjustifiable rebellion, but they were very soon overcome by the loyal forces, and as their cases were of a most aggravated character, they were cast into prison under sentence of death. There, feeding on poor scanty prison fare, clothed in mean prison dress, and sleeping on hard prison beds, they suffered much and were in great distress.

One morning, while bemoaning their hard lot, they were visited in their several cells by one who professed to be none other than the crown-prince, the reigning sovereign's only son, who, after reprimanding them for their most unjustifiable crime, announced free pardon, asked them to follow him, not only out of the prison into liberty, but also to a restoration to their original position in the empire and to the favour of the Emperor.

One of the three recognising, as if by instinct, the royal bearing of the person before him, the truthfulness of his character, and his good, kind, sympathising intentions towards himself, at once jumped up in a state of great excitement and joy, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Emperor and to the prince, and was in the greatest impatience to accompany him to his sovereign. The second did not feel very sure that all was right and asked to see the pardon—the words and the seal of the Emperor. On being shown these, and being satisfied after a minute examination that all was right, he also joined with the first in expressions of joy and gratitude and of desire to accompany the prince without delay.

The third prisoner, still cherishing hard feelings towards both the Emperor and his son, doubted the

personal identity of the prince, the authenticity of the writing and the genuineness of the seal, and¹ professing to fear that a cruel hoax was being practised upon him and not realising the full danger of his condition, refused to move until he first saw the prison fare, the prison dress and the prison bed replaced by what he was pleased to call proper food, a proper dress, and a proper bed. He paid no attention to the fact that these were the food, dress and bed appointed for all in prison, that neither he nor any of the other prisoners deserved any better, and that by his doubts and suspicions, as well as by his disloyal feelings, he was doing dishonour to his sovereign and insulting the prince royal. The latter however, ignoring the insult paid to himself, not only expressed his pity for him and his indignation at his conduct, but also told him that his conditions were dishonouring to his royal father, and, besides, that the sovereign did not condescend to treat of terms or conditions of peace with his own incarcerated rebellious unrepentant subjects. The two trustful, believing prisoners following the prince, left the prison and entered into the enjoyment of liberty and then sovereign's favour, a favour which was never again lost to them. The third remained in his cell, in his misery and wretchedness and discontent, raging against his sovereign and his kind pitiful son, and against the hard conditions of his own lot.

In this story, let us suppose that God and His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, are represented by the Emperor and the crown-prince and that the three prisoners represent different classes of the human family. There are those, for example, who are so impressed by the character of Christ and the salvation He offers, that they ask for nothing more. They are quite convinced of the genuineness of the divine offer, as well as of the divinity of Him through whom God in these last days speaks unto us. To such the message at once commends itself as that which is natural and suitable. They therefore put their trust in Christ without delay, and, with unmistakable signs of gladness

of heart, accept his offer of salvation. And they are saved. Like some little children one sometimes meets with, they, as it were, looking straight into the face and down into the heart, are satisfied, and at once they give their confidence and are at peace.

There are others not so easily satisfied. They ask for what they call "reasonable evidence" of the authenticity of the message and the trustworthiness of the Messenger. To these the Prince answers—"The works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him." When John the Baptist fell into doubt and sent disciples to Jesus, enquiring whether he was indeed the Messiah of God, or they were to look for another, Jesus answered and said unto them—"Go and show John the things which ye do hear and see—the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me," i.e., who shall not demand other evidence than these, or who shall be satisfied with these. John the Baptist's disciples went away, it is believed, satisfied, and the incarcerated prophet was comforted.

Spinoza, the Jewish founder of modern pantheism, and one of the greatest of men, once said, that if he could have persuaded himself of the resurrection of Lazarus, he would have broken in pieces his whole system of pantheism and embraced the ordinary faith of Christians. With regard to a very insignificant, but grossly exaggerated phenomenon, Buddha is reported by his ancient biographer to have said—"Can a man, guilty of lying, perform such an act as this?"

The evidencing power of miracles has been felt in all ages, and, in spite of what is said to the contrary, that power is felt by men and women of culture

in this the last quarter of the nineteenth century of the Christian era. See how men are led by the so-called occult phenomena, but really the lying signs and wonders of Theosophists.

In drawing attention to the miracles of Jesus, I may state at the outset that there are a great number of questions connected with miracles on which I do not intend to touch. Let us rather confine attention to one question bearing on our subject—and a preliminary objection which it is desirable to remove before we take up the question or subject to be especially discussed. Our question is, Did or did not Christ Jesus, in attestation of His divine mission, perform those supernatural deeds with which He has been credited by His biographers and the founders of Christianity? In other words, Is there reason or evidence sufficient to satisfy our supposed second prisoner, sufficient not indeed, like the demonstrations of geometry, to destroy moral probation by forcing conviction on an unwilling disposition, nor to meet every cavil that unreasonable scepticism may suggest, but enough to satisfy every candid and reasonable enquirer?

The object of this paper is to show to men of the character of John the Baptist and of the second prisoner of our parable, and to all men who are willing to be persuaded, which I scarcely think Spinoza was, that not only did Lazarus rise from the dead at the word of Jesus, but that all the other miracles referred to in Christ's answer to John, did take place—as also the great crowning miracle of Christ's own resurrection.

The evidence is so very voluminous and of so cumulative a character, to suit different dispositions and temperaments, that the difficulty is one of selection or choice, and the question is where to begin?

These works to which he appealed in answer to John's enquiry, are generally spoken of in Scripture as signs, wonders, and miracles. I shall make no attempt at defining or explaining what constitutes a sign, wonder, or miracle, but I may observe that the following works of Jesus are generally classed under these words—

the healing of the leprous, the blind, the demoniac, the withered, the lame, the deaf and dumb, the hushing of the tempest, and the raising of the dead, all of which Jesus performed by the word of His mouth. It is worthy of notice that as many as thirty-six different specific actions of this kind, not including miracles of prophecy, are detailed in the four gospels, six of them common to two gospels, and as many as eleven to three out of the four evangelists. While in addition to the feeding of the five thousand with the five loaves at Bethsaida recorded by the four evangelists, all four also record the crowning miracle of the resurrection.

It is generally believed that John had seen one or more of the other gospels, possibly all three, before writing his own, so that he very seldom goes over the same ground with them or records the same events. He seemingly set before himself the duty of supplementing the other gospels, or of supplying what he regarded as of prime importance, more especially our Lord's addresses.

It may here also be noticed in answer to those who are ready to assert that the miracles are a later growth and inserted in the biographies of Jesus, because written, as they say, long after the events described, that John's gospel is the one which ought specially to come under this charge as the one admittedly the latest written of all, but which, as a matter of fact, has the fewest miracles. It is inconceivable, on such a theory, that the latest gospel, the furthest removed from the crucifixion, should have the least number of miraculous incidents.

As to the *preliminary objection*, it has to be admitted that there are some who are ready to stop our progress on the very threshold of our enquiry by contending that miracles are in their very nature impossible. I will not, however, stop to discuss this objection, as I am satisfied with the *dictum* of Huxley, as representing modern science. "No one," says he, "who wishes to keep well within the limits of that

which he has a right to assert, would assert that it is impossible that the sun or moon should ever have been made to appear to stand still in the valley of Ajalon." Again—"No event is too extraordinary to be impossible, and therefore, if by the term miracle we mean only extremely wonderful events, there can be no just ground for denying the possibility of their occurrence." And yet again—"The day-fly," says he, "has better grounds for calling a thunderstorm supernatural, than has man, with his experience of an infinitesimal fraction of duration, to say that the most astonishing event that can be imagined is beyond the scope of natural causes." This can only mean, if we understand Professor Huxley rightly, that it would be the utmost presumption in any human being to deny the actual occurrence of the most astonishing event that can be imagined. No doubt, a person like Professor Huxley, who denies the supernatural altogether, will say that this "most astonishing event" that can be imagined, if it takes place, takes place by natural causes, though these be totally unknown to him. While the consistent theist will ask—"May not God have caused this most astonishingly imaginable event to have taken place in the manner in which it has, as an evidential sign, for the comfort or instruction of His creatures on earth? If we consider the wretched, perishing condition in which men, God's creatures, are, and consider that God is loving as well as powerful and wise beyond our conception—facts which the Christian argument must assume,—the improbability of superhuman interference in the interests of men passes away, and such interference becomes actually probable. Hence, even in the absence of such *a priori* probability, it will be seen that Huxley and all true scientists of modern times will allow that all the events recorded in the gospels did actually take place with all their circumstances as stated, provided only evidence satisfactory enough to their minds be given to them.

Then to Huxley and the like of him the question would arise—How could a young Jewish peasant,

nineteen hundred years ago, without any scientific instructors, have known, and have such a command over, such secrets of nature as to be able to restore the dead by a word, and to quell the storm in the same manner, and to multiply a few loaves of bread so as to feed four or five thousand of half-starved people? Jesus Himself would in that case be a greater miracle than any miracle He ever performed.

In regard to the testing of these miracles, it must be remembered that miracles performed, as the miracles of Jesus were, in the region of common life, may be tested as well by the common sense of the multitude as by the precision of the man of science.

It is worth observing also that science in its wonderful progress during these nineteen hundred years, has not made the slightest approach towards enabling man to perform such deeds as Christ performed. In fact, the progress of science has rather strengthened, than otherwise, our conviction of their supernatural character. For the wonders of Mesmerism, so-called Spiritism, and of Theosophy differ not only in degree but in kind from those of Christianity.

This preliminary difficulty being removed, where are we to begin our evidence of the credibility of the miracles of Jesus?

There is no use beginning at the present day as to the evidence of the truth of what took place nineteen hundred years ago. We must project ourselves in fancy back to the earlier ages of Christianity, when unbelief first presented itself, and ask ourselves as to its nature at that time. If we do, we find the following interesting phenomena presenting themselves to our view.

(1) There is not a particle of evidence adduced by the enemies of Christianity against the miracles of Jesus, nothing even to render them in the circumstances in the slightest degree improbable. The hypothesis of God's sending His own Son for the salvation of man on the other hand makes them highly probable.

Those miracles, it must be borne in mind, are represented as performed in honour, and for the authentication

tion of God's own Son when sent into the world to save man from ruin. The end in view shows the reasonableness of the means. Without such an end we could not expect such signs and wonders. Hence we do not meet with any such before or since. But with such an end, we do expect such miracles. The event was unique. Hence its accompaniments were unique too.

(2) There is no other account of the origin of Christianity by any writer of the time, Jewish, Christian or heathen. The accounts we have were written and published within the lifetime of eye-witnesses, on the spot where the events took place, in the face of strong antagonistic interests against the natural inherited prejudices of the narrators. And, as I have said, they were not denied for many hundred years thereafter.

(3) The number and variety of the miracles recorded render it impossible that the witnesses should be deceived, embracing as they do the instantaneous cure of all the ills that ordinarily afflict humanity in almost every conceivable circumstance of life. And the fact that the first accounts were written and disseminated, preached and believed in, by the people among whom the miracles were performed, adds immensely to their credibility, as also the fact that these people were not a sympathising people. In these respects they differ from all other signs and wonders, and so-called occult phenomena that have been associated with any other religion since the world began.

(4) The earliest deniers of Christianity, including His own contemporaries, depended much more on physical force than on logic, reason, or facts of history, for the refutation of Christianity. In resisting the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah, they had no great confidence in their ability to gainsay the facts or to show the fallacy of the arguments by which the claims of Jesus were established.

(5) Further, one and all of them admitted the principle of a divine revelation, as well as the legitimacy of supernatural evidence. They allowed that God did communicate His will to men, and that, in attes-

tation of the communication being His, He empowered His ambassadors to perform miracles. They did not call in question the fact that Christ performed miracles, including the raising of Lazarus from the dead. And

(7) Lastly, the impugnors of Christianity in the earlier centuries, not excepting the distinguished Celsus and Porphyry and the imperial Julian, admitted the genuineness and authenticity of the Christian gospels, the biographies of Jesus. The three mentioned were the most bitter, most determined, influential and accomplished enemies of Christianity in the earlier ages. But not one of them called in question the fact that Christ performed miracles, or that the gospels were authentic, genuine historical documents, and in the general possession of the Christian Church of the time. These men, while strenuously fighting against the religion and morality of Christianity, and while living at or about the very time when the last of the New Testament writings were composed, and were thus in a position and most willing to throw doubt upon the genuineness of Christ's miracles, did not do so, because it was not possible for them to do it with any show of reason. In passing, we may also notice the fact, though bearing on a later period, that Muhammad, the founder of Islam (570-632 A. D.), not only did not deny the miracles of Jesus or the genuineness of the Christian Scriptures, but expressly admits both, as in the following among other passages — "And verily We [God] gave Moses the Book, and caused prophets to arise after him, and We gave to Jesus, the Son of Mary, evident signs and strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit" Sura II, v 87, "And We [God] gave unto Jesus, the Son of Mary, evident signs, and We strengthened Him by the Holy Spirit" Sura II, v 254, "And We [God] caused Jesus, the Son of Mary, to succeed them [the prophets], and We gave Him the Gospel" Sura LVII, v 25, "And when Jesus, the Son of Mary, said — 'Oh! children of Israel, verily I am an Apostle of God unto you, attesting that which is before Me of the Tourât

"[the Pentateuch of Moses], and giving glad tidings of 'an Apostle that shall come after Me'" Sura LXI, v 16 This passage evidently refers to Christ's promise of the Comforter or Paraclete, whom Muhammad and his followers were anxious to identify as none other than the Arabian prophet himself. The passage admits the purity and authority of the Jewish Scriptures and of the Gospels as known to Muhammad. "God sent down the *Touât* [the Pentateuch] and the Gospel from before for the guidance of mankind. Verily they that reject the signs [*these revelations*] of God to them shall be a fearful punishment" Sura III, v 2. One passage more from Sura V, v 119 — "And (call to mind) when God said, 'O Jesus, Son of Mary' remember how Thou healedst the blind and the leper by My command, and when Thou didst raise the dead by My command," &c

But it will be said in regard to all these—'People in those days were so ready to believe in the supernatural, and the miraculous. They ascribed miracles to all men alike.' When writing fictitious history, we admit that they did, but not when writing genuine history. When composing fanciful biographies of the heroes of the far past, they did, but not when writing true biographies of their contemporaries. Hence it is that in the biographical sketches given to us in the gospels concerning John the Baptist, we find no miracles ascribed to him. Why? Simply because the gospels are dealing with actual facts—with the truth of history, and hence, as John the Baptist performed no miracles, no miracles are ascribed to him. Yet John is regarded as a prophet inferior to none of those great prophets that preceded him. Jesus lays great stress on John's evidence to His Messiahship, and the biographers of Jesus laid still greater weight upon it. It was the most natural thing in the world in these circumstances, if they had been concocting a biography of Jesus, to insert some miracles in their sketches of John, so as to increase the value of his evidence. But they were not concocting a history, but writing a true

biography, and as John had performed no miracle, none is ascribed to him, even though his prototype, Elijah, had miracles ascribed to him.

In the same connection it is worthy of remark that no miracles are ascribed in the genuine Gospels even to Jesus Himself, during the first thirty years of His life, that is, prior to the three years of His public ministry. Why did not the fancy of the biographers of Jesus run riot over His childhood, youth and earlier manhood, as some suppose it did over the three years of His public life, and as most certainly the fancy of the authors of the Apocryphal gospels did, and as that of the biographers of Krishna's childhood did? The only answer that we can conceive as satisfactorily solving the question is that Christ's true biographers were describing historical facts and not fanciful fictions. The authors of the Apocryphal gospels were drawing upon their imaginations for their facts. Fancy and fraud do not curb themselves as Matthew Mark, Luke, and John did,

Some may say—"We want to know the opinions of the enemies of Jesus as to the truth of His miracles." Well, we have already given the opinions of such men as Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, and the renowned founder of Muhammadanism, and in the gospels themselves we find the opinions of Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, and all of them admitted the genuineness of the miracles of Jesus. But we have, if possible, more satisfactory evidence than any of these. We have the evidence of men like Saul or Paul of Tarsus, and the great body of the early Christians who from being men "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ," abandoned flattering worldly prospects to be subjected to persecution and contempt under a conviction that these things, to them no small danger and discomfort, were true.

In this manner enemies became first believers and then friends. Here, then, is the testimony of honest enemies—not of enemies who examined the evidence and remained unconvinced, which would justly throw

some doubt on their sincerity, but enemies who examined, sifted and searched the evidence as a matter to them of life and death, and were convinced, and being honest truth-obeying men, embraced it and gladly suffered for doing so. Some modern critics have rejected Josephus' testimony to Christ, not from any want of external evidence, the passage being in all the oldest MSS, but because speaking so favourably, he did not himself become a Christian.

It is generally admitted that all the early Christians must have believed in the miracles of Jesus, and especially in His resurrection from the dead. Their testimony, the testimony of men who risked not only the comforts and happy prospects of this life, but also, as they believed, their eternal happiness, on the truth of these miracles, is fully as good as if they had put it into writing and their writings had come down to us. It is life-and-deed evidence.

Then besides these—in themselves a very cloud of witnesses—we have the direct personal testimony of many writers. Matthew the Roman tax-collector, and John “the beloved disciple,” both of whom were eye-witnesses, testify to what they themselves had heard with their own ears, to what they had seen with their own eyes, to what they had looked upon and their hands had handled.

We have the detailed life of Jesus, with these miracles forming part and parcel of it, written by Mark, the companion and fellow-traveller of a leading disciple of Jesus, who had been His close companion during the whole period of His public life, and another life written by Luke “the beloved physician,” the companion and fellow-traveller of the great Apostle Paul.

Besides these, there are also other works by two of these same writers, letters and historical annals of much value, testifying to the same life, with its miraculous deeds. And in addition to these four, we have writings by Peter himself, by James and Jude, all three eye-witnesses, and by Paul, last but not least of them all, forming a very respectable body of letters sent to

various parts of the Roman Empire and to various bodies of Christians. And all these writers, be it remembered, were contemporaries of our Lord and of His first disciples. They had the very best opportunities of knowing the truth of what they wrote, they were bound by the highest considerations of self-interest as regarded their lives, their comfort, their success among their fellowmen in this world, as well as their salvation and happiness throughout all eternity, to discover the truth of that to which they testified.

Of these eight witnesses, James, Peter, Paul and John had actually to suffer death itself because of their persistence in testifying to the truthfulness of the miraculous facts recorded in the gospels, including the stupendous miracle of the Resurrection of Jesus. Besides, all of them had to live lives which enabled them to say, with greater or less fulness, with the Apostle Paul —

“In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered ship-wreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness”—2 Cor., xi 23—27

Now, all this hardship was endured simply and solely because Paul and his fellow-sufferers would persist in testifying to the truth of those miraculous facts of which they themselves were trustworthy witnesses, or of which their companions in suffering, and in whose veracity they had the fullest confidence, were eye-witnesses. Observe that these men had no conceivable support sufficient to sustain them under all the trials, difficulties and persecutions to which they were subjected, except the truthfulness of the facts which they published. As Paul on one occasion said—“If these facts were not true, ‘they were of all men most miserable,’ having had to sacrifice all in this life—position, fame,

rank, comfort, possessions, friends, relatives, all—on the conviction that the facts were as they represented them, and if the facts were not true, they had to face, in return a guilty conscience, an angry God, a dreadful judgment and a gloomy eternity

Further, notice that these men could not have been deceived as to the truth of their story, nor would they gain anything for time or eternity by testifying to the falsehood, save infamy and ruin to soul and body. If their story was not true, they exposed themselves to the justice of the rulers, Jewish and Roman, and to the outrageous fury and righteous indignation of the multitude, and all this simply, on this most improbable and absurd supposition, to propagate a lie. The very idea is preposterous.

But further, let me remark that these witnesses not only testified to the miracles of Christ, but testified that whatever miracles were wrought by His disciples were wrought in His name and by His power. The mere fact of their claiming to work miracles in His name shows that they must have believed that He performed miracles, and that He was believed by the people among whom they laboured to have performed miracles.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews must have been a contemporary of Christ's Apostles, as he is generally admitted to have been even by the enemies of Christianity. He speaks of the word spoken by the Lord as confirmed to himself and his friends by them that heard Him, "God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost."

If the writer was the Apostle Paul, as some suppose, then we have, as in others of his Epistles, Paul's direct testimony to the fact that the disciples worked "divers miracles," and if they did, much more did their Great Master. If the writer was not Paul, then we have a ninth witness, clearly a man of great intellectual gifts, deep piety, sterling honesty and profound knowledge of Christian doctrine and Jewish rite, testifying both to the miracles of Christ and to those of His disciples.

Paul himself in his Epistle to the Galatians, the Kelts of Asia Minor, expressly refers to his working miracles among them. In his Epistle to the Christian inhabitants of imperial Rome he refers to the "mighty signs and wonders" which Christ had wrought by him. In his second Epistle to the inhabitants of sensual Corinth, he speaks of himself as he was generally known in the early ages as "the Apostle," the seals of whose ministry were "signs and wonders and mighty powers." Hence Luke, the devoted author of the "Acts of the Apostles," speaks of the "miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them," &c. by Paul and his fellow-traveller Barnabas.

Now, all this took place in accordance with the Commission which, we are informed by three out of the four biographers of Jesus, they had received when sent forth to preach the gospel, viz., to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils. These mighty works done in His name were to be the signs of the Apostleship which He had given them. If He so commanded them to act in His name, He himself must have possessed power so to act, and He must have exercised that power in their presence.

And as it is with the teaching connected with His sending forth of the disciples, so it is with most of His teaching. It cannot be separated from the miracles without destroying the whole. His person, his character, his mission, all presuppose the supernatural. So also his teaching. The two are inseparable in every life of Christ which has come down to us. Let us illustrate what we mean by an example or two. Read the various discussions recorded in regard to the Sabbath, and you find that they most naturally arose out of some miracle performed by Christ on the Sabbath day. His retorts to His enemies—"which of you shall have an ass or an ox, fallen into a pit, and will not straight-way pull him out on the Sabbath day?"—"How much then is a man better than a sheep?"—these words presuppose His having performed a miracle of mercy to a human being of greater urgency and importance.

than the pulling of an ox or a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath day. So also His retort concerning the casting out of devils—"By whom then do your children cast them out?" And His whole answer to the charge that it was by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, that He cast out devils—"Every kingdom divided against itself shall not stand, and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how then shall his kingdom stand?" In fact the whole life of Jesus belies the suggestion that He was in alliance with the evil one. His enemies of His own day felt it to be so, and their successors, while possessing narratives of His whole life and death, as far as written, have felt it still more. No wonder both Mark and Luke record the astonishment of the people at the manner in which Jesus treated these subordinates of Beelzebub. They were all amazed, in so much that they questioned among themselves saying, "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him."

Take yet another example. You find Jesus frequently charged with blasphemy. In fact it was under that charge that His own countrymen professed to have sought His death. This charge was founded on the fact that, one way or another, He assumed to Himself divine power, as for example, in connection with His performance of miracles. As an instance in point, take that very instructive miracle of the cure of the paralytic to whom Christ had first addressed the words of comfort—"Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." The charge was at once raised against Him of making Himself equal with God. How did He meet the charge? By denying it? Not at all. But by virtually admitting that all His miracles implied His equality with God. He virtually said—"True, it is only God that can forgive sins—but it is only God that can perform such miracles as I do. If the one presupposes divine power so does the other. In fact the miracle may be regarded and truly so as the attestation of the

power to forgive" So Jesus, as the historian informs us added—"That ye may know that the *Son of Man* (the name by which he always condescendingly styled himself), hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say," here He turned to the poor paralytic and addressed him—"Arise and take up thy bed and go into thine house" The whole narrative presupposes the miracle, and a miracle too, performed in the presence of a large multitude, many of whom were learned and malignant enemies able and willing to detect any flaw in it, and when detected to publish it. It also is a narrative recorded by three out of the four biographers.

As it was with His teaching so it also was in regard to his whole character. You cannot take away the miracles, without rendering His teaching unintelligible. Neither can you take them away without mutilating His character. As ambassador from God to men, the miracles illustrated as well as authenticated His character. In His claim to be Lord of nature, the Son of God, it was highly probable, that He would manifest His power over nature. In His claim to be the Saviour of men He had to manifest both His power and ability to save and His goodness of heart to console. Hence we find His miracles were all worthy of the majesty, justice, holiness, and benevolence of the Son of God, the Saviour of men. His words were words of love, and His works were miracles of mercy and of goodness. They are characterised as we would naturally expect by power, authority, dignity and loving kindness. The good, temporal as well as spiritual, of those on whom they were performed, as well as the comfort and instruction of the spectators, are very prominent in them all, on the other hand there is nothing ludicrous, sensual, puerile, vindictive, or self-seeking to be found in them. He neither gratifies the vain curiosity of the crowd, nor sets Himself so as to gain by means of them the applause of the sign-seeking multitude, nor yet the removal of His own discomforts. His miracles were not mere prodigies—like turning stones into bread and reconverting them into stones, nor carrying mountains on the tip of

his finger, nor as Matthew Arnold suggests converting *a pen into a pen-wiper*. Their value did not lie in their miraculousness, such as the discovering of hidden treasures, thought-reading, "low tricks and lying practices" such as Buddha so severely condemned and Theosophists ran after. Hence it was that Christ remained in poverty, enduring want, hunger, thirst and weariness though possessed of power to place Himself in the most affluent and comfortable of circumstances.

How very different in these respects are Christ's miracles from those ascribed to Hindu gods and goddesses, to Buddha, to Hindu Jogis, to Roman Catholic Saints, to the followers of Muhammad, or even to Christ Himself in the apocryphal gospels. There is a reality, a suitableness, a suggestiveness and a reasonableness to be seen in the one which are altogether wanting in the others. The character and will of God are revealed in the miracles of Christ as much as in His doctrine. They are indeed sources as well as evidences of the doctrine. They form part and parcel of the revelation of grace as well as credentials of its divine origin. They are useful and beneficent as well as morally and religiously significant, rising naturally out of the performance of His mission and the revealing of His Father. They form an integral part and parcel of His ministry. They are classed along with preaching the gospel to the poor, as part of His mission, and they are at the same time evidence of His Messiahship. Take away the miracles from the Bible, more especially from the life of Christ, and you destroy its value as an exhibition of grace or love towards the children of men. With the miracles retained, a gracious *purpose* is seen as its guiding principle from the beginning of the Bible to its end, and more especially from the beginning to the end of the life of Jesus. He *must* do miracles to be true to Himself as full of grace and truth. In this way Jesus becomes to us "God manifest in the flesh in the fulness of grace," the very image of God. And no one can read the authenticated biographies of Jesus without feeling that the miracles therein recorded form an essential part of

the historical divine person to whom they are ascribed, and that consequently without them the image would be imperfect and deficient

As it is with the teaching and the character, so also in regard to the chain of events constituting the Life. The miracles form so many of the links, that if you remove them, the whole chain falls to pieces, and all attempts to make a new chain of the remaining occurrences have hitherto completely failed, and every new chain so attempted has differed *in toto* from every other such attempt. As an example of what I mean, why were the rulers of the Jews at Jerusalem so determined to put Jesus to death? The biographer answers because of the raising of Lazarus from the dead in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The answer is so suitable that Renan, the clever but sceptical Frenchman, is forced to admit that there must have been something of the nature of an apparent miracle to rouse up His enemies. Why had Jesus to rise early in the morning and go to a desert place as recorded by Mark (1:35)? Why, because all the city had been gathered together at the door the previous evening on account of the many miracles he had then performed, and why, again, in the same chapter could Jesus no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places? Why, because the leper, whom He had just cured and charged not to publish the miracle, went out and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter. But the great crowning illustration of the fact on which I am insisting is the change which took place in the character of the disciples immediately after the resurrection of Jesus, and indeed all the events connected with their organizing themselves into the Christian Church with its propagating zeal, and self-denying activity. The stupendous miracle of the resurrection is the only rational or even plausible explanation that has hitherto been given, or is likely ever to be given, of all these most extraordinary and otherwise unaccountable facts and events of history.

Thus we see that the teaching of Jesus, the character of Jesus, the design or purpose of grace of His mission,

the various facts in His life, and especially those connected with the early rise of the Christian Church, presuppose miracles as their only rational explanation. Miracle, teaching, personal character, and narrative constitute the stones of a magnificent arch, the removal of any one of which will ensure the destruction of all. The removal of the miracles would be like cutting out the pictures of a piece of tapestry, the complete destruction of the piece as a whole. Separate bits and threads of the cloth might remain, objects of admiration in themselves, but the cloth as such would be ruined. Rajah Ram Mohun Roy's *Precepts of Jesus* have found favour with neither Hindu, Brahmo, Musulman, nor Christian. The words of Jesus are there, and nothing but His words,—but being extracted with the evident intention of eliminating the supernatural, the very life is taken out of Jesus' words. "I say unto you." You have nothing left but a broken battered torso of the God-Man Christ Jesus. And this is the more remarkable as Ram Mohun Roy professed to believe in miracles and the supernatural.

Then again consider the frequent cautions of Jesus to His disciples and others lest too much be made of the miracle or sign, as distinguished from the object, end and teaching of the miracle. He presses upon the people that He is more pleased with those who believe in Him without seeing the miracle than with those who are for ever seeking after signs and miracles. For, if a miracle be regarded as simply an inexplicable wonder or marvel, beginning and ending with itself—a mere occult phenomenon, an isolated prodigy, then, of course, it is an event of no significance whatever, its only effect is to make people stare and wonder. But such were none of Christ's miracles, and such He refused out and out to perform. "Believe me, said He, that I am in the Father and the Father in Me or else believe me for the work's sake." Those believing in Him for the work's sake are placed on a lower platform, and yet the works to which He appealed were not mere wonders, or astounding phenomena, but

God-worthy and God-revealing works To others He said complainingly, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe" When some of his disciples seemed to glory unduly because of their power to perform miracles, He checked their self-glorification and said—"In this rejoice, not that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven"

In all these and similar passages we observe a solicitude on the part of Jesus lest too much be made of mere miracles or works of wonder, a solicitude which would never characterise a mere miracle worker or thaumaturgus, a spiritualistic trickster or clever juggler, a conjurer or prestigator The tendency with such persons would be to make the very most of their miracles and wonders There would be no disparaging of their very source of power and influence, such as we observe in these words of Jesus

And in connection with this let me observe that there is no attempt to exaggerate or over-estimate these miracles either by Christ Himself or by His biographers In regard to Christ His words and deeds are allowed to speak for themselves, and in regard to His disciples, the biographers of Jesus speak of their miracles and of themselves with much candor and frankness as to their short-comings, or inability, as well as to the successes, all which has every appearance of truth They inform us in the most artless manner of the lowliness of their birth, the greatness of their ignorance, the inveterancy of their prejudices, the meanness of their occupation, their inability to perform a miracle on one occasion, their silly contention as to which of them would be greatest on another, their faint heartedness in the hour of danger, the temporary apostasy of one of their first three, and the thorough treachery of another of their number There is no attempt to hide or to extenuate or minimize The writers were clearly more concerned about the truthfulness of their narrative than about their own or their companions' character

Then what are we to make of Christ's injunctions oft repeated, not to report His miracles? Do they not come under the same heading—a fear to make too much of His miracles as such—a fear which undoubtedly presupposes their truthfulness. They did not proceed from a fear that the miracles should be thoroughly examined and found false, for these were all performed in open day-light, in the presence of multitudes of witnesses, under the inspection of determined enemies, as well as of convinced friends, and were of such a character, that accomplices could be of no service, and detection would be easy, if false. In connection with them there was no room for trick, luck, illusion of the senses mechanical or other contrivances, sleight of hand, or collusion with friends or disciples. Yet on some of these occasions he pressed on those whom he healed not to make the miracle publicly known. He was solicitous that His miracles on certain occasions and in certain circumstances should not be noised abroad. For example to a man whom he sent home cured of blindness, near Bethsaida, he said, “Neither go into the town, nor tell it unto any in the town.” What is the explanation of this reticence? He had to guard against too great a popularity rising in His favour, a very likely thing among the excitable masses of Galilee. On one occasion, we read of the desire to make Him their king and of the pains he took to escape from such a catastrophe. He had frequently to conceal Himself from the people and to retire to private places.

The same explanation is to be given of His desire not to make too much, at the beginning of His public life, of His Messiahship. Yet the Evangelists have to confess that these injunctions proved comparatively ineffectual. His miracles were noised abroad. His efforts to conceal Himself, His retiring to the mountains and desert places, and His continual migration from one part of the country to another, none apparently allowed to follow Him save His immediate disciples, were all in vain.

All this conduct is compatible only with the genuineness of the miracles and an intense desire to do good to the people, while yet preventing a catastrophe by which they would be injured and His usefulness suddenly brought to an end.

We have a remarkable and suggestive exception to this practice of Jesus recorded in the middle of instances where the practice is followed. We refer to the maniac of Gadara. He was expressly told to go to His house, to His friends, and to tell them how great things the Lord had done for him, and how he had mercy upon him. While to those who were present at the raising of Jairus' daughter, he gave the charge that no man should know this, and only two chapters before, he had strictly charged those cured of the unclean spirits that they should not make Him known. Why was the maniac of Gadara told to make known the miracle performed on him, and these others strictly charged not to make known those performed on them? The reason, one can easily see, though it is not stated, was that among the Gadarenes or Gergasenes, where Jesus was comparatively unknown, where He did not intend to make any stay, and where besides so many of the people had lost their swine by His miracle, there was no fear, because no probability, of an uprising in His favour.

As a popular hero described by writers, all belonging to the people, one would expect some account of the personal appearance of Christ. One would expect that he would be described as so tall, possessed of so powerful a frame, of so beautiful and winning a countenance, such and such hands and feet, such a face and hair and so on, as popular heroes, and demi-gods and Hindu gods and goddesses and as Buddha and Muhammad are described. But no. In all the detailed narratives of the four evangelists and the various allusions to Him in the other apostolic writings, there is not the remotest allusion to His personal appearance. Is this the way, I may well ask, in which men write the history of their heroes? Neither the mythologies of

Europe nor yet the classics of India describe their heroes in this manner. Even in the Rig Vêda, where the deities are simply natural phenomena, we read of Indra's nose, lips and chin and of Rudra's limbs and braided hair, and much more do we find glowing descriptions of the personal appearance of the divinities of the later *shâstras*. The explanation of the difference is that the evangelists were not creating a hero but describing a historical personage, of whom, we suppose, nothing very remarkable or striking to the ordinary eye could be seen in His personal appearance, or if there was it was so thoroughly eclipsed by his words and works, that it was overlooked. Hence no remarks are made about it.

Enough of the general, let us approach very briefly the particular. Let us for a moment, and in conclusion, look at the separate and independent evidence of one of these miracles. And let us take the great and instructive miracle of the resurrection as that one. Separate and independent evidence, we say, but it must be remembered also, evidence additional to what has been already advanced in behalf of the miracles of Jesus in general. And it will be well for us to bear in mind that it was a miracle which Jesus had foretold, and consequently a miracle of prophecy as well as of power, but one which His disciples, so great was their love to Him, could not at first believe, inasmuch as it implied an antecedent cruel crucifixion. Indeed, when He spoke of it, it only suggested to their minds that they should or would die with Him. "Let us go," said they, "that we may die with Him." Though loving Him greatly, yet up to the resurrection they were carnal, selfish, self-seeking, cowardly, and fearful. The boldest among them was filled with dismay by the questions of a young girl, and from fear were huddling themselves within closed doors in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were plain, simple, comparatively illiterate, unsophisticated fishermen, brought up from their youth in the practice of the sacrificial rites and ceremonies of the Jewish faith. Yet these men (no

longer carnal, selfish and self-seeking) boldly and self-sacrificingly proceeded to preach in the face of Jew, Greek and Roman, that the entire system of sacrifice was done away, being fulfilled in the one great sacrifice of Christ Jesus. And, wonderful to relate, they persuaded Jew, Greek and Roman in hundreds and thousands, that it was so, that their own religions had come to an end, and that now they must take to a religion whose cardinal doctrine was one great central sacrifice, offered up once for all for Jew, Greek and Roman alike. The only conceivable explanation of this great change in the character and conduct of these timid and self-seeking fishermen of Galilee and of their most extraordinary success, is the fact that the Lord had indeed risen from the dead and had been seen by them, as He had promised. And yet the belief in this fact cannot in any way be traced to any prepossession in favour of it, nor a fixed idea in support of it, nor even to a wish or a state of expectancy.

It is not necessary for us to stop any time on the proof of the fact that Christ had actually died. The fact and circumstances of His death are recorded by each of the four biographers. The Jews made it at the time, and make it still, a ground of reproach that He died the death of a malefactor on the cross. All their successors have admitted that fact. True, Muhammadans have denied his death, but their theory of Judas dying in his place and Christ's ascent into heaven without tasting death is in its details so absurd and void of all evidence as to need no refutation. The Roman soldiers, men experienced in such things, expressed their unhesitating conviction that He was dead. But to make matters doubly sure they inflicted on the dead body a wound which would have itself proved fatal, and further a wound which has supplied evidence to modern medical men that Jesus had been dead before that wound was afflicted, and that He must have died of a broken heart. Sir James Simpson, Dr. Begbie, Struthers and Stroud, the most distinguished doctors of the Edinburgh University, testified to this some twenty years ago.

Then, thus dead, He was laid in a grave, hewn out of the solid rock, in which no other body had ever lain, a grave too not chosen by His disciples, a grave securely closed by a large stone not easily moved, sealed by the mighty Roman seal, strictly watched by a guard, not of sympathetic Christians, but of Imperial Roman soldiers. It was under these circumstances that He rose

Hell and the grave combined their force
To hold our Lord in vain,
Sudden the conqueror arose,
And burst the feeble chain

And had not the disciples evidence enough to satisfy any reasonable mind that Christ had indeed risen as He had promised He would? Most assuredly they had. Did not five hundred of the brethren at one time see Him after He had risen? Did not Mary see Him first of all at the grave and converse with Him? Did not many other women see Him on two different occasions? Did not Peter see Him alone? Did not two other disciples see Him on the way to Emmaus, converse with him at length and eat with Him? Did not the eleven disciples see Him on two different occasions as they were assembled within closed doors in Jerusalem, on one of which occasions inviting the most sceptical and critical among them to put his finger into the nail-prints in His hands and feet, and his hand into the spear wound in His side? Did they not again see Him on the Lake of Genesaret and exhibit to them a fac-simile of one of the most impressive and suggestive of His miraculous deeds of beneficence and power, and eat with them there also? Did He not again show Himself to the eleven on a Mount in Galilee? Was He not seen by James alone in addition to all these, and lastly, as far as the forty days immediately succeeding His resurrection are concerned, was He not seen on Mount Olivet by all the Apostles as He ascended after conversation with them? Yes, on all these and possibly also on many other occasions during the same forty days, they had convincing oracular and other evidence of the fact that He had risen

We have written as if it was simply *seeing*, as if only one of the senses was cognisant of the risen Saviour. But no. They not only saw Him, they touched Him, talked with him, heard Him speak, ate with Him, examined His body to satisfy their doubts, heard and recognised His well-known voice, not one person, but many, in numbers varying from one to five hundred, they saw Him not by night only but also in broad day-light, not at a distance but near at hand—not in a believing, but also in a critical and unbelieving frame of mind. The disciples were not looking for His resurrection. They were on the other hand, on hearing of it, taken quite by surprise. The report of His resurrection was in each case, at first disbelieved. Nothing less than *sight* convinced those who had the deepest desire to find the tidings true, and even sight was not in every case immediately convincing. Here then are no materials for illusion, delusion or hallucination.

The limitation of time is also very remarkable—forty days. Why forty days? Why not years? I throw no doubt on Stephen's view of Him in the heavenly world, or Paul's supernatural revelation of Him on his way to Damascus. These appearances are totally different in kind as well as in time from those which Paul himself sums up as evidence of the Resurrection.

Observe then the fact that we have a large number of witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus within the forty days. None after that time. Why? Simply because of the fact that Jesus was no longer visibly on earth. The risen Redeemer in His human form took His place on the right hand of Majesty on high. He had remained with His disciples on earth as long as it was necessary to their confirmation and steadfastness in the faith, but no longer. To his various appearances within the forty days there is abundant evidence. Beyond that there is no evidence, simply because, beyond that period, He was not on earth in order to be seen. The evidence is to facts, not to fictions. Hence, when the facts cease the evidence ceases too.

One who had made history and historical evidence his special study for many years, the distinguished Dr. Arnold of Rugby, in one of his most instructive sermons to the "boys" of his world-renowned school, says—"I have been used for many years to study the history of other times and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair enquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

John Stuart Mill frankly affirms that "a revelation cannot be proved divine unless by external evidence, that is by the exhibition of supernatural facts." Here then we have got the "supernatural facts," and according to one most qualified to judge, the best and fullest evidence of every kind in their support. And it is evidence of the most positive and convincing character without a particle of a contradictory nature. In spite of the persecutions and the torture to which the witnesses were subjected, not a word was got from any one of them to throw doubt upon their truthfulness. No one came forward from among the many backsliders and faint-hearted to divulge any secret imposture or to point to any trick or jugglery. Not even Judas, the traitor, or Peter, the denier, or Thomas, the sceptic, in the hour of weakness and persecution, came forward to expose any flaw or deception in the evidence, not even one of the hostile Jews among whom Christ lived and laboured had anything to say against the genuineness of His miracles, however much they might vilify Him and produce false evidence against Him in other respects.

But it will be asked by some, Why, if such miracles were performed in those days, are there not miracles performed by Christians now? It is enough to say in reply, that once the divine origin of the Christian revelation was proved by "the exhibition of supernatural facts," that great object was secured and there was no further need of them. And as the Ruler of the Universe

and the God of order, not of disorder, God is rightly sparing of miracles. When an ambassador or consul arrives in Calcutta he produces his credentials in order to authenticate himself, but once that is accomplished and his position is acknowledged, he no longer flaunts his commission before men, nor does he wear it on his sleeve for daws to peck at.

But though sensible miracles may be said to have ceased, we have evidence of the truthfulness of the supernatural in Christianity brought very vividly before us in the present as well as past condition of the Jews, and in the Institutions of the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day, the first an abiding witness of the truthfulness of Christ's supernatural teaching, the other two abiding witnesses, the one to the death of Christ, the other to His resurrection. The history of the Jews, taken in connection with their present condition, constitutes from any point of view one of the extraordinary chapters in the history of the world. But to the Christian the most interesting thing about them is the remarkable manner in which they continue to verify the prophecies made concerning them not by Christ only, but by Moses and their own other ancient prophets. Many volumes have been written on this subject, and on other sections of the evidences of Christianity on which the space at my disposal will not allow me so much as to touch. To those who are disposed to pursue the study I would strongly recommend the series of volumes being published by the London Religious Tract Society under the name of *Present Day Tracts*, Wynne's *Plain Proofs*, Tymm's *Mystery of God*, Dr. Harris' *Self-revelation of God*, Row's *Manual of Christian Evidences* and Dr. Fisher's *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Faith*, to the last of which I am specially indebted for suggestive thoughts while writing this paper.

But to benefit from any book, one must approach it with a willingness to learn, and to be practically guided by the truth, wherever found.

In conclusion, allow me further to add that this paper is but as it were a specimen of the evidences that

might be produced in behalf of the credibility of the miracles of Jesus. From their very nature they are cumulative, and if there be any who, after reading the above are not fully convinced they have only to prosecute, in a right spirit, their studies further, and if they are open to conviction, I have no doubt but they shall have abundant reasons fitted to produce conviction. But, even as it is, I think I have supplied reason sufficient to satisfy our supposed second prisoner, sufficient to satisfy one willing or desiring to be satisfied, not sufficient, however, either to destroy moral probation by forcing conviction, or to meet every cavil that unreasonable scepticism may suggest. My desire is simply to satisfy the candid and reasonable enquirer. That this with God's blessing may be the result at least in some cases is the prayer with which I conclude

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF MERE THEISM.

TO prevent mistakes, and to add to the clearness of what follows, I must explain my terms, which are indeed not mine, but given me, and first and chiefly the word *theism*. I use it in opposition to pantheism, atheism, and agnosticism. It implies a knowledge of and belief in one personal God, the Creator and Supreme Being, in contradistinction to a professed ignorance or denial of a personal God. Theists believe in one personal God, Pantheists, Atheists, and Agnostics do not.

Again, the word 'theism' is used in contrast with polytheism. A Theist believes in one God. He is a Monotheist. He does not believe in two or more supreme Gods, nor in one supreme God and a number of subordinate deities. The Lord our God is one God, and beside Him there is no other *God*, but we do not say there is no other *thing*, as says the Pantheist. Mr Arnold was not a Pantheist when he defined God as "the power, *not ourselves*, which makes for righteousness." Theism, with a proper understanding of the word or phrase, cannot take *ekamevaditryan*—"one without a second"—as its motto and interpret it, as it is sometimes wrongly interpreted, as if it meant one without a second God, but as it truly means God without an indefinite second, a second anything. The Theist believes in God and matter, in God and man, God and ourselves, who are not God in whole or in part. Further, the Theist believes in the personality and activity of God. He believes that God thinks, wills, loves; that it is proper to attribute to him will, wisdom, and love. To the Pantheist God is without attribute. He is *nirgun*.

The word *theist* comes from the Greek word *theos*, God, just as the word *deist* comes from the Latin

word *deus*, God Etymologically the two words mean the same Historically they are frequently made to refer to different denominations of religious people The word *deist* got into prominence in the English language in the eighteenth century as a name for those who believed in a personal God as a conclusion of the natural reason, but who repudiated the need of any revelation beyond what is naturally given to every man instinctively, or which any man may attain to by meditation on the works of nature around him The works of Bishop Butler and others brought the word into such disrepute that no Theist now likes it It may be compared with the word *native* in this country, a word innocent enough in itself, but one which many believe has also fallen into disrepute The words *pagan* and *heathen* in the same way fell into disrepute in the course of time, while the corresponding words, *villager* and *mountaineer*, have not

The word *deism* is otherwise the proper word for what I mean by "*naked, simple, bare, or mere theism* " The word *theism* includes in it Judaism, Christianity, Muhammadanism, Deism, and Brahmoism The followers of all these claim, and justly claim, to be Theists They are Theists or Monotheists, believers in the one supreme personal God Judaism, Christianity, and Muhammadanism, in common, believe in the facts that men need a revelation and that God has given them a revelation

Deists all over the world, and Brahmos in India as a rule, profess to believe that God has not given any revelation, and, indeed, that none was needed It is the creed of these and such like people that I mean, in the wording of my subject by 'Theism'—some would say bare, or pure, or mere theism But as each and all of these words are objectionable from one point or another, I prefer to use the word 'deism' instead of 'theism' in the following discourse

I use the word *insufficiency*, of course, with reference to the religious needs of the human reason,

conscience, and heart Deism, or naked theism, does not satisfy man's enlightened reason, his quickened conscience, or his developed emotions or religious instincts as Christianity does The deism or theism that I am considering does not meet the demands of the logical or the moral faculty, or the emotional nature of man, to the extent Christianity does This is what I mean by its 'insufficiency'

My subject takes for granted two things, into the proof of which I will not enter It takes for granted the truth of Theism You are not Atheists, Agnostics, Pantheists, or Polytheists We are, of course, prepared to take up the insufficiency of every one of these, but not now and here I, as a Theist, address you as Theists—I am a Christian Theist, and the greater part of you are non-Christian Theists or Deists—and I contend that my platform as a Christian Theist satisfies better the demands of the soul than yours or that of the Deist does

I now hasten to try and make good my contention, or my thesis—'The Insufficiency of Deism' The first point I take up is the repudiation by the Deist of all professed communications from God to mankind, otherwise than what is held through the works of nature I illustrate what I mean Muhammad, Joseph Smith, and Keshub Chunder Sen professed, each of them, to have received a communication, an *adesh*, from God on the subject of marriage A Deist or Brahmo properly so called would reject the communication at once as incredible, if not impossible, in any circumstances The Jew, the Christian, and the Muhammadan would look into the matter and into the evidence, if any, in support of it, before rejecting it, for there is nothing in *their* principles which would lead them necessarily to reject it

I have referred to this illustration partly with the view of pointing out that Brahmos among themselves do not seem to be agreed on this fundamental point of Deism

Now reason, conscience, and heart unite in asking

for an explanation of the presence and prevalence of pain and moral evil in the Universe. Pessimism, Agnosticism, and Atheism are agreed in accepting them as evidence of the absence of a good, wise, and all-powerful personal God in the universe. Huxley, John Stuart Mill, and Buddha are one here in their contention against all Theists, whether Jewish, Christian, Muhammadan, Brahmic, or Deistic.

Of all answers that are given to the Agnostic or Atheistic position, the Deistic or Brahmic is the weakest, and when the answer is given, he can only say—It is *probably* a true answer, or I *think* it is true, while the Christian can say—I know my answer is true, for God Himself has revealed it to men by commissioners from Himself duly accredited. For though it may be quite true, as some unbelievers have contended, that the mind cannot receive an idea which it could not originate—a dogma of no value whatever from our standpoint, it is undoubtedly true, and it is a most consoling truth, that the human mind can receive a truth by revelation which it could not, with any certainty, know otherwise to be true. It can receive the idea of God and the idea of love, and originate the idea that God is love, but it could not proclaim with certainty the fact that God is love, or that He loves with a God-like or divine love. Then comes the further question—Is divine love a self-sacrificing active love? Is it like that for the leper with which Father Damien is credited? Hindu philosophy unhesitatingly answers—No. European and Theistic philosophy as a rule answers—Yes. Who is to decide? God alone can. And no one can fail to see that an authoritative and affirmative answer would be an immense consolation to a suffering wretched human being, in the face of all the trials, pains, sufferings, and sins of this life.

When Mr. N. N. Ghosh, editor of the *Indian Nation*, the other day charged Brahmoism with presenting “no brighter view of life than Hinduism does, that it offers no such consolation as Christians claim for Christianity, and that in several respects it is more

gloomy and ascetical than Hinduism itself," what answer did our Brahmo friends give to the charge? Here it is in the words of the *Indian Messenger*, the organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj—"Brahmoism is the sworn enemy of pessimism, which may be said to be the foundation of Hindu theology [as of Buddhist philosophy] To Hinduism the world is an abode of misery To Brahmoism it is the expression of divine activity To Hinduism life is an illusion, to Brahmoism it is a solemn reality To Hinduism birth is the result of the sins of a previous life, to Brahmoism it is the gateway to gradual perfection and eternal progress To Hinduism the *summum bonum* is the merging of the finite personality in the supreme essence, *Brahma*, to Brahmoism it is the blissful communion with a personal God It is a gross mistake to place pessimistic Hinduism and optimistic Brahmoism on the same footing "

Now, all this may be quite true, but separated from Christianity from which it has been taken *en bloc*, the consolation is taken out of it, because without Christianity it is without any evidence of its truth, it is unauthorised teaching Nature does not teach it Reason does not teach it It is, when outside Christianity, the product of pure imagination, and as such liable to exaggerations Put it side by side with the facts of nature as stated by John Stuart Mill—and what then has it to say for itself?

"In sober truth nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances Killing, the most criminal act recognised by human laws, nature does once to every being that lives, and in a large proportion of cases after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow-creatures

Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like

the first Christian martyrs, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold [strikes them dead with heat], poisons them with the quick or slow venom of her [malarious] exhalations, and has hundreds of other deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst, upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises and often as the direct consequence of the noblest acts, and it might almost be imagined as a punishment for them. She mows down those on whose existence hangs the well-being of a whole people, perhaps the prospects of the human race for generations to come, with as little compunction as those whose death is a relief to themselves, or a blessing to those under their noxious influence. Such are nature's dealings with life. Even when she does not intend to kill, she inflicts the same tortures in apparent wantonness. . . . Next to taking life (equal to it according to a high authority) is taking the means by which we live, and nature does this, too, on the largest scale and with the most callous indifference. A single hurricane [or scarcity of rainfall] destroys the hopes of a season, a flight of locusts or an inundation desolates a district, a trifling chemical change in an edible root starves a million of people. The waves of the sea, like banditti, seize and appropriate the wealth of the rich and the little-all of the poor with the same accompaniments of stripping, wounding, and killing as then human antitypes. Everything, in short, which the worst men commit against life or property is perpetrated on a large scale by natural agents.*

This long quotation does not tell the half of what might be told, and Mr Mill returns to the subject a

few pages on with terrible earnestness, and ends with the words—

"If we are not obliged to believe the animal creation to be the work of a demon, it is because we need not suppose it to have been made by a being of infinite power" (p 58).

Now, it will not do for the *Indian Messenger* or his confidères, like Nelson, to set their telescope to a blind eye and pretend not to see these things, and claim an *optimism* superior to that of Christianity. The facts of the case must be faced, or else the field surrendered to atheism and to agnostic pessimism.

The Christian does face the facts "We know," says the Apostle Paul, "that the whole creation groaneth" "We are born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," says the Prophet Job. And the Lord Jesus himself echoes the fact with the Christian consolation attached—"Let not your hearts be troubled ye believe in God, believe also in me" It is the belief in Him that makes all the difference in the world.

It is quite true that the Christian Theist and the Indian Deist can alike dwell with pleasure on marks of goodness and kindness, designs to secure happiness and pleasure and comfort to man and beast scattered all over creation, and that through the labours of these, specially the former, during many ages of careful observations, many such marks and designs have been recorded, as in the *Bridgewater Treatises*, &c. But what are they to the Pessimist or the Atheist? Nothing more than the extenuating circumstances pleaded in a criminal's defence. The burden of them remains. The damaging facts are really untouched by such pleas. When arguing against the eighteenth century Deism of England, Bishop Butler was apparently satisfied with leaving these difficulties at the Deist's door; and no Deist has ever succeeded in removing them from it, or, indeed, in making any serious plausible attempt at removing them. Deism is totally insufficient for the work.

And as far as I am aware, there is no removing

them, except by an appeal to the whole scheme of moral and religious culture and redemption embodied in Christ Jesus and His teaching. No other weapon is capable of defence from the atheism and pessimism of Buddha and of John Stuart Mill. Mr. Mill admitted as much—Christianity or Atheism, no middle house or resting-place to the enquiring spirit, was his emphatic declaration.

There is something nearer to us, and still louder in its demands for an answer than even the groanings of creation—the pains, pangs, sufferings, and death connected with the physical world and the lower animals. And that is the moral discord we each of us find within us. And if Deism was insufficient for the removal of the physical difficulties, much more so of the moral difficulties.

It is very easy for Deist and Atheist to laugh at the story of the Fall as recorded in the book of Genesis, and referred to so confidently by the Apostle Paul. But can the Deist or Atheist supply so good and satisfactory an explanation or answer to the facts of nature? I do not refer so much to the setting of the explanation. It may go or remain, it matters little. Look for a moment at the kernel or jewel around which the setting is placed. Man is before us, it matters not at present whether he arose gradually by evolution or development from the lower brute creation, or suddenly appeared on the scene. If the former, there must have been a time when he had no moral faculty, that is, no consciousness of the *ought* and the *ought not*. There must have been a time when the idea first presented itself to his mind, 'I ought not to do this, but I feel drawn to do it,' and a time when he yielded and thus *sinned*. In so acting, he fell from the platform on which he had previously stood. It matters little, as far as we are at present concerned, whether he was created originally on that platform, or whether he had risen to it from the lower creation; until *that* sin was committed he was innocent, and, so far, holy. The moment that sin was sinned, he

was morally a fallen being. A moral discord had found for the first time a lodgment in his constitution. He had violated God's law in violating his own nature. He became ashamed of himself, and tried to hide himself. And the higher he had risen into a realization of the duty of the moral law and the perfections of God, the more dissatisfied he would be with himself and with his condition, and with the discord or strife within him. We find him in that condition here and now, and all the history we have of him throughout all the ages so represent him in all quarters of the world. Paul and the Book of Genesis and all Christians connect all that with the Fall. And the law of heredity explains the connection, so far as a scientific law can be said to explain any fact of nature. Science says that "even physically man's body, the tenement and implement of the will, must have been impaired. Habits of nerve action would be originated more or less detrimental to the perfect sway of the will over its organised instruments." And all this as the result of the fall from moral rectitude. This is our Christian explanation, satisfactory to intellect and conscience. What has Deism to put in its place? Nothing.

To proceed. I ask the Indian Deist whether God had intended that this discord, or moral strife, in man's constitution, the existence of which he cannot deny, was not only permitted but approved of by God or not? Was man, in doing what he did, doing what God wished him to do, or acting contrary to God's will? If our friend answers that he was doing what he was intended to do, what nature led him to do, and that he could not have done otherwise, then where is God's goodness? The citadel is surrendered to the Atheist. Christian and, I would fain hope, Deist will agree in answering, "No, God did not wish or intend that man should so act. Man in so acting was breaking God's and nature's law. The *ought not*, of which he was conscious, was God and his higher and better nature speaking to him." If so, then the question

arises, what then? Did God hereafter let him alone or let him be? Or did God foresee and make some provision for such a frightful catastrophe, or did it take Him by surprise?

Christians know that God had foreseen man's ruin, and had provided against it a scheme by which, men, all men, if they so choose, may escape the evils of the fall, at least as far as their moral and spiritual consequences are concerned—a divine scheme planned from all eternity, by which the goodness, holiness, and justice of God may be vindicated to man, man's intellect satisfied, his conscience appeased, and his heart relieved.

God did not remain an uninterested spectator of the ruin man brought upon himself. He was not a dumb, silent spectator of it all. The laws of nature provide abundant evidence of the fact that every violation of the law has inevitable penal consequences. If you put your finger into the fire, it shall suffer and be destroyed, if you stand under the fiery thunderbolt, you will be killed, or in the pathway of the cyclone or the deluge, nature shall show no mercy upon you from the physical standpoint. But by this scheme God provides that man's nature shall be not only renovated but very greatly improved and ennobled, and that by the sufferings endured, and for all those who would accept it, a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness shall dwell will be provided. All this says Christianity. But Deism has nothing to say beyond a denial of all this and a loud talk about so-called uniformity of nature, which, as far as this is concerned, is simply without any proof and without any meaning. Here Deism practically acknowledges its own insufficiency. It is utterly helpless. Let me illustrate—

Sir Charles Babbage invented a most wonderful calculating machine which could count and calculate with absolute correctness and with unerring uniformity various abstruse calculations and record all these as it went along. But at a certain point in the

process it would all at once vary its methods and seemingly err, once, twice, or, indeed, any number of definite times, and then resume the old calculations with the same uniformity and correctness as before, and thus proceed until its parts were worn to pieces. Now, suppose a thoughtful and educated man was to discover such an instrument and find it going. He would be filled with admiration for its inventor, and would show it with much interest to his friends. While dilating on the beauties of the machine, let us suppose he came on one of these variations or seemingly false numbers, the exhibitor would at once be filled with confusion and his confidence in the maker and in the machine would be diminished, if not destroyed. But now, suppose another party comes, expresses his joy at seeing the machine, and refers to *St. Charles's* book which he carries with him, and in which these variations are foretold, their usefulness or necessity explained, the effect would undoubtedly be greater admiration than ever for maker and instrument.

Now, Atheist, Agnostic, and Deist have discovered the great machine and its seeming or real mistakes, the Atheist and the Agnostic conclude that the maker was a bungler, the Indian Deist persists in saying that it is no mistake, but he can give no explanation, he persists in saying and affirming and asserting that no explanation is needed, and there leaves it, the Christian has the Maker's book in which a full explanation is given of the rationale of the mistakes. And who will say that, in the circumstances, there was no need for any authoritative explanation? There was need. And let it not be forgotten that *that* is no defect in an instrument, as a whole, which fits it for the fulfilment, of its intended purpose, however great a defect may appear when considered simply with reference to the part in which it manifests itself.

So it may be in regard to the pains, pangs, and troubles of the lower creation, they may prepare, as

the Bible tells us, the creation as a whole for a higher development in the paths of righteousness and towards the time when there shall be no more sin or sorrow, and when the whole creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of (God Rom viii, 21) There can be no immortality in the creation of a moral being for such high moral ends "Christianity represents God as having considered it good for man to be made, good for him to pass through all we now look back upon, all we now experience, and all that still remains to be done and suffered, but it claims to set before us a sequel which will amply recompense our race for all its struggles, and turn the groaning of creation into an excellent Hallelujah to the Lord God who hath done all things well" (Tyndal, p 129) So that where sin abounded, grace might abound more exceedingly, that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness into eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom v, 20-21) In one word, we may say the moral cause of the universe, as far as known to us and as far as we have to do with it, is that God's grace and righteousness might be displayed in the salvation of fallen men But, mind you, man's fall was his own doing

God created a volitional being, and so far limited his own authority in order to adorn his creature with this the highest of its gifts to unfallen innocent man. And as God cannot (be it said with reverence) do two contradictory and mutually exclusives, for example, create and leave uncreated, so he could not create man in possession of free choice and prevent his exercising free choice To fall was, therefore, within the range of the possibilities, and God foresaw that this possibility would become an actuality, and provided that the fall should be to the eternal good of man and glory of God, and that thus man might be trained to a life of goodness and righteousness, that is, a life superior to a life of comfort and happiness This takes the sting or venom out of

our quotation from Mill, for this Deism is insufficient. Christianity is able to satisfy the cravings of man's intellect and heart; Deism is not

It is a well-known fact that theism has had a venerable life in this world, if not from the creation of man, most certainly from the time of Abraham, 'the friend of God' as Christian and Mussulman agree in calling him. From him we have a long line of prophets, to whom God communicated his will for his children's good, among whom his religion had remained comparatively pure, and through whom he made known his gracious purposes, not merely or indeed chiefly by words, but by deeds also. These communications have been a source of comfort, strength, peace and consolation to Muhammadan, Jew, and Christian from that day to this. They, and those who believed in them, were the only Theists in the world, as far as the most learned in the present day can discover. There was no Deism in those days, for it is of yesterday.

That being the case, the following question presents itself for solution at the hands of Deists — These Theists, our deistic friends admit, so far as they alone were Theists, were alone right in the world on the one great point of the existence and character of God—all India was pantheistic, or polytheistic, or both. But all those Hebrew Theists, according to Deism, were either impostors or self-deluded fanatics on the points most comforting and consoling to their hearts, and most strengthening to their arms, fighting against all unrighteousness. All that made God a sun and a shield, a refuge and strong tower to them, in regard to the fears and temptations within and without, was, according to Deism, a delusion and a lie, and yet they were the only compact body of Theists in the world. The divine promises in which they trusted, and which in their experience they found true, were, according to Deists, only vain conceits. Well may Jew, Christian, and Mussulman unitedly ask the Deist—*How is this?*

You, Deists, say that God was all the time silent, never opened his mouth, and *you* admit that these men, the only men who possessed any correct knowledge of God in the world, asserted that God was not silent or dumb, but had spoken words of guidance, wisdom, power, and love to themselves

This is a great charge you bring both against God and against his people. We wait for your reply. How can these things be? Moses, Abraham, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea were neither fools nor fanatics, neither impostors nor cheats. They were the best men of their time and among the best of all time. They believed that God actually comforted them when they were distressed, actually took pity upon them when they were in trouble, and actually strengthened them in their hours of weakness. Did He do so, or did He, on the other hand, remain dumb and passive and inactive, like those great granite sphinxes which have looked down with changeless smile on the land of Egypt for forty centuries, or like those colossal statues of Buddha which, during the last twenty centuries, have pointed out to the Occidental the way to India and the Far East, while cities rose and fell around them, but have themselves never opened their mouth or moved a finger, or accompanied a single votary a step in his journey? Temples were raised to God's honour, proclamations were issued in His name, idolatry was attacked in the strength of His imagined words, irony even was poured upon false gods that had hands but handled not, eyes but saw not, ears but heard not, and we now learn from Deists that this one personal God was to all intents and purposes, as far as His own sole worshippers were concerned, just as blind, deaf, and powerless to help or to save.

Can any of you say that this is a satisfactory explanation of the history of Theism during these centuries or millenniums? The Bible alone gives a sufficient and compact history of early Theism. Here, again, the insufficiency of Deism is apparent.

It cannot explain its own past history or that of the only Theism that the world has ever seen.

It is also unequal to explain its present. What is the present of Deism? It is simply that of a parasite, feeding on Christianity, whether it admits it or no. Read the *Liberal and New Dispensation* or the *Indian Messenger*. Then hymns, then thoughts, are all from Christian sources. They live in a Christian atmosphere. Deism, whether Indian or English and American, will be found at the present moment to be drawing its sustenance from Christianity. Its growth and seeming healthiness, so far as it is not in a moribund state, are all got from Christian blood. Deism has never appeared in the past, nor does it anywhere exist in the present, apart from Christianity. In fact, it is nothing else than Christianity stripped of the supernatural. But it may be said—Why not have it as such? Well, properly speaking, Christianity stripped of the supernatural means Christianity without a personal God. Of course this is not what is meant. What is meant is Christianity as represented in what is erroneously called unitarianism. But unitarianism, as the word is generally understood, means the creed of those who accept Christianity *minus* the divinity of Christ, the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection of Christ, and all the miracles referred to in the Bible, whether of power, or of knowledge, or prophecy, but not necessarily excluding the belief in the great miracle or miracles of creation of matter and of life—the first in point of time of all earthly miracles.

And that leads me, in conclusion, to the point that Deism is insufficient for the production of the Christian virtues—enthusiasm for our brother man, self-sacrifice in his behalf, humility in the presence of God, and courageous boldness against sin. There are people here in India and elsewhere who profess to admire these essential virtues of Christianity, the religious life which it originates and embodies, the communion

and fellowship with God which it secures, and the glorious hopes which it cherishes. Such men would separate these from the doctrines or dogmas which Christianity teaches, the historical facts which it proclaims, and especially from the miraculous incidents and lives on which it is professedly founded. All the former they would regard as the essence of Christianity, in fact pure Theism, and good, the latter as mere accidents or fortuitous accretions, and mostly or wholly fictitious. This *a priori* rejection of the supernatural, let it be observed, has no logical place on which to rest the soles of its feet, unless it presupposes the total and unconditional surrender of Theism altogether. What God has done in the past, or what he may do in the future, is known only to Himself and to those to whom he may be pleased to reveal it.

There is, however, a still more formidable objection to this so-called pure Theism in the fact that there is not the faintest probability of any body of Deists being ever able to conserve the essential virtues, and the religious life of Christianity without the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection of Christ and the other miracles which form essential parts of His life and character. In these superhuman facts the roots of these virtues are fixed, from these they draw their vital nourishment. Anywhere else these flowering plants of Christianity would be exotics, needing supernatural care, and even then never propagating by graft, root, or seed. The most luxurious plant of this kind that has flourished in modern times was that which rose on the soil of Boston in America, watered by the tears of the Puritan Fathers, and President McCosh, the well-known philosopher, tells us that the Deism or unitarianism of Boston is dead and laid out for burial—a fact which explains the other fact that the Rev C H A Dall, the only missionary representative of the Unitarian school in India, and I understand in the world, has had no successor.

The inner life of the true Christian, its beauty, its

completeness, and peace cannot be raised on any other ground than Christ Jesus, as set forth before us in the four Gospels. George Herbert beautifully and truly says—

That repose

And peace which everywhere
With so much earnestness you do pursue,
Is only there

The Christian's enthusiasm for humanity, his self-denial and humility of heart are found growing only at the foot of the cross. Faith in the objective realities of the Christian religion, on which the Bible chiefly dwells, will bring to those who genuinely receive them the corresponding states of mind and affection. Only we must seek the faith first, and the latter will follow. The power which resides in any word, or which operates through a word of God, requires one, and no more than one, condition for its operation. It must be believed. The message given to Eli had a power of death in it, because it was believed, the message of Paul to the Philipian jailor had a power of life in it, because the jailor believed it. But neither word could have any power unless believed. No doubt, all these virtues might grow on faith in these things, even though the things themselves were fictitious, but then on the faith being undermined, on the facts being found to be without foundation, it would inevitably die without any chance of a revival. It is only faith in the supernatural mission, the divine personality, and the saving work of Christ, the ever-living Redeemer, that can give a foundation on which to build such a superstructure. It is conscious assurance of the divine reality of all this that constitutes the first round of the building raised over these foundations—an assurance which the Apostle Paul and his fellow-Christians of the first century most certainly possessed. A cross-examination of these men would inevitably, and at once, lead to these realities as the foundation on which their spiritual life rested. A

prevailing conviction of God's gracious mind towards us, working in, and through and with us and a consciousness of our abiding affection towards Him and towards our fellow-men as our brethren in Him—this is the light in us—this is the salt of the earth. But all this is not only congruous with the historical facts of Christianity, which constitute the supernatural element, but it is utterly incongruous with Deism, which is insufficient for such a life. Such a life, besides, as a living reality, makes the acceptance of these facts easy of belief, being in themselves to such a mind credible, independent of the historical evidence which commends them to the scientific mind, and it is the absence of such a living faith in God and of such an affection towards Him and towards men that makes it difficult for men to believe in the supernatural, however strong the scientific, that is historical, evidence in support of it may be. The life strengthens the conviction, the conviction feeds and sustains the life.

It is an undoubted fact that the state of the heart influences very largely the acceptance or rejection of historical verities. Most men are disposed to look ahead in regard to their intellectual activities, as well as in regard to all other activities.

Real faith in God's love to man will discover His infinite God-like love in the supernatural facts of history, while a faith more or less doubtful of the infinite love of God will throw doubt upon those historical facts on which that love is indelibly stamped, as, for example, the fact that 'God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

It is devotion to God as thus loving, and to Jesus as thus giving Himself, that begets a like self-denial and self-sacrifice, which leads to the regeneration of humanity and makes truly for righteousness in the fullest and highest sense of the term. This undoubtedly was what lived and moved in the minds

of all great Christian workers from the Apostle Paul to Father Damien Wilberforce, Howard, Clarkson, Sister Doia, and Miss Nightingale felt the sweet constraining power of that love as expressed in these facts. The two were inseparably and lovingly wedded together in their souls, and that by God Himself. And we can truly say of the marriage—"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." With Deism there is no such marriage.

There is nothing more unworthy of God in His revealing Himself in the facts of history than His doing so in the facts of the human consciousness. There may be as much of the real supernatural in God favouring my soul with the sweetness and light of His presence, as in His raising the dead, or in His bestowing sight upon the blind. When a Deist or any one else tells me that God enlightens him through his religious instincts or intuitions I answer—*there* is the supernatural without historical facts or evidence to give it credibility.

When I as a Christian put my trust in the teaching of Christ as an authenticated commissioner from God, who showed the seals of his commission in the divine works he performed, I feel that my faith has a firmer foundation to rest upon than if I was to rest solely on my own religious instincts or intuitions, much more so when I find the one confirm the other. I reject no kind of trustworthy evidence. I accept all, more especially as I find that they converge towards the same holy and happy consummation. Because I find that one kind of food is pleasanter to the taste than another which may be more invigorating, am I going to give up the latter and restrict myself to the former? Certainly not. On the other hand, I support myself mainly on the latter and reserve the other for a dessert. It is an undoubted fact that men who live on external nature, the facts of history and science, are firmer and more robust than men who live solely on their inner feelings, while it is equally true that men who never feed

upon their feelings, instincts, and intuitions lack the beauty, grace, and poetry of life, are in fact largely debased and degraded to the mere animal life of the brute beast. To such there can be no true fellowship with God. We must live upon both if we are to be true men. In this matter, as in many others, the *via media* is the true way. If we mean to be men, we must be neither Mystics nor Materialists. Deism rejects the facts, hence its weakly constitution.

Again, have we any reason to believe that God would be pleased by our seeking communion with Him *solely* through our own inner consciousness and not at all through the consciousness of others, and through His dealings with the great and good men of the past, and through His own works, supernatural as well as natural? Have we any right to pick and choose in such things? Would it not be presumption on our part so to act? Have we any reason to believe that He would be displeased by our seeking instruction from the communications He may have given to other men in past ages of the world's history? Or that He would be displeased with these men leaving on record, for the instruction of unborn ages, the soul communion they may have had with Him? There is no *a priori* or any other reason known to me that would lead to such conclusions. Or have we any reason to conclude that He would restrict us to any one kind of evidence concerning His own existence, His character and relation to his creature, man, wherever found? None that I know of. As far as this matter is concerned, we may well say that the true child of God finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything. One may be more instructive than another, but that is no reason why the other should be wholly neglected.

We are also to remember that to one man one thing may be more helpful, to another another may be more so, and even to the same man the amount of helpfulness and the relative helpfulness may vary, according

to the mood or temper of mind the man is in at any particular time. We are open to various influences at different periods of our life, and according to the prevailing *zeitgeist* or spirit of the age, as well as to the moral and spiritual condition of our own souls. One man requires milk, another strong meat. Most men are *led*, some have to be *driven*. Some men find intellectual pabulum and nourishment from history, others from mathematics, and yet others from metaphysics. God in a like manner feeds our spiritual life in varying ways. Deism may appear sufficient for some intellectual minds, but totally insufficient for others. There are men no doubt, like Matthew Arnold, who profess to despise facts, and who assert that they find their whole spiritual sustenance in fancies—poetical sentiments—but this is dishonouring to God as well as false to man. The soul that truly lives must have both, and God has in His goodness given both, and of the most edifying kinds, in sufficient abundance for all men. And just as true poetry is alike debtor and creditor to history, so is faith also—and divine fellowship is founded on such a faith.

The Christian's faith in the gospel history is founded and established on all kinds of evidence, and each becomes stronger the more thoroughly and sympathetically it is looked into. But this faith is not in an impersonal God, or in an abstract force, or a timeless, dumb God. It is in a God with whom we have personally to deal, and who personally deals with us in time—the God of history as well as of the inner soul, and more especially the God of grace—who has defined and revealed himself as LOVE, and yet as the holy and the just, in the history of the race as well as of individual men and women, a God who has, as it were, spoken face to face with them on such and such a year, and on such and such a day, it may have been morning, noon, or in the cool of the evening, and told them of His infinite condescending love to them and care of them, and of all He has done

for them of what happiness would be theirs by a reconciliation with Him, and what wretchedness by a persistent neglect of Him and his love. And it is a conscious knowledge of such historical facts, worked into the soul by God's own spirit, that creates the essential virtues of Christianity and the true religious life of the Christian. All these Deism as such lacks. It is insufficient to produce a superstructure on which such virtues could rest and vigorously grow.

One word more and I am done. There is nothing in Deism on which to rest for the man who hesitates between Christianity and atheism. If in the great future towards which we are hurrying, Christianity should be found untrue, even then the Christian is not worse off than the Deist, even then it will be found the Christian's eternity is secure, but if the Deist find that Christianity is true, that on earth he had wilfully and persistently rejected and despised God's offer of salvation, what then? And next? We would rather not say, but only hear what the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says, namely, that "if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb x, 26, 27). "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (11, 3)

THE SIXTY-SIX BOOKS AND THE ONE BOOK.

—000—

I—THE SIXTY-SIX BOOKS

WE have seen that, not only did the Lord Jesus give the most satisfactory credentials of His exalted mission, but that the prophets who preceded Him and the apostles who followed Him had His guarantee, in addition to credentials of their own, for the accuracy and authority of their teaching of spiritual truth. And now we have to consider the question, as to what means we have of access to the teaching of these apostles and prophets and of Christ Himself, and what guarantee we have, that what has come down to us is indeed the very truth which they taught when they were here on earth. The answer to this question will bring us at last to what so many unfortunately are inclined to take first, viz, the Holy Scriptures as an inspired record of the revelation which God has given to man.

And here we have first to deal with the extraordinary perversity and unfairness, so common in our day, of treating the Scriptures as if the whole collection were only one book. Of all the unfair devices for weakening the evidences of Christianity this is perhaps the very worst. And it is surprising that so many good Christians allow it and even encourage it. So great is the mischief arising from this, that it would almost seem a pity that, even for convenience, the sixty-six books which form our Bible, are so constantly bound together in one volume. For not only is there the unhappy result of reducing the many witnesses to one, in the minds of unthinking people, but also of silencing and putting out of count that one. For such unreasoning suspicion is abroad about the Bible, that there are multitudes of people, and even some good Christian people, who would attach a great deal more importance to the testimony of almost any writing outside the

Bible, than of any number of writings within it. Show them a fact attested by Matthew Mark, Luke and John, Paul and Peter, and they will say "All that is in the Bible, give us something outside of the Bible and we will believe it." The Bible, in the first place, is regarded by them as the work of a single author, and in the second, as that of a prejudiced author, one who has his own cause to bolster up, and accordingly a hundred confirmations within its covers are not so good as one from the outside would be. Is this not unreasonable in the extreme?

Let me suppose a case, in order to put the monstrous injustice in a clear light. Suppose that, very soon after the invention of printing, some enterprising publisher had collected all the original materials of any value in regard to the history of the Roman Republic and bound them together in one volume, which he issued to the world under the title of "The History of the Roman Republic," and suppose further that it became so popular, that it was circulated first by hundreds, then by thousands, then by hundreds of thousands, and finally by the million, so that it came into almost everybody's hands. But in course of time, after all the world had become so accustomed to it in its form of a single volume, there sprang up a fashion of scepticism on the whole subject, and everything in the volume was regarded with suspicion, and accordingly the whole history of the Roman Republic was called into question. Those who believed it called attention to the many different authorities who corroborated each other. "Here is Livy, who writes about it in Latin. Here is Dion Cassius, who writes about the same thing in Greek. Here are speeches of Cicero that relate to the same events. And here are poems of Horace that could not have been written unless these facts were so." But the opposite party immediately silenced them by triumphantly pointing out that all these different authorities were no authorities at all. Why not? Because that publisher and that bookbinder of the fifteenth century had published and

bound them up together ! That of course settled the question In the first place it disposed of all the separate witnesses, of Livy, and Dion, and Cicero, and all the rest, for were they not all bound together in the same volume ? And in the second place it disposed even of the single witness of the collective book, because it was the credibility of the book itself which was in question, and, therefore, all that was in the book must be ruled out as the testimony of an interested party And so it came to pass that, from the single unfortunate circumstance of the scattered materials having been considered by this publisher to be worth collecting and publishing in the same volume, the evidence for the history of the Roman Republic was utterly destroyed !

Let us, then, by all means remember, when we are dealing with the subject of the Scriptures, that we are dealing not with one book, but with sixty-six, not with a single volume, but with a library Remember, further, that these sixty-six books are not links, but strands of evidence There is, indeed, a golden chain of sacred history from Genesis to Revelation, so that in a historical point of view, many of the books of the Bible are links But, so far as the evidences of Christianity are concerned, they are not links, but strands This can be very easily shown The strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link, and if a single link gives way, the whole is useless Now, will any one pretend to say that, if it were proved that the book of Esther had no divine authority, we should have to give up the gospel of Matthew ? Would there be no evidence for the divine authority of Christ if the Lamentations of Jeremiah had happened to have been lost ? Why, there would be enough to establish the divine authority of Christ, if we had nothing more than the four evangelists, as we have already shown, and whatever of confirmation or elucidation comes from the sixty-two other books, is just so much in addition The Bible is not a chain of sixty-six links, it is a cable of sixty-six strands, and if there is such strength as we have found in four

of them, what shall we say of the united strength of all the sixty-six ?

We do not deny, indeed, that in a very important sense the Scriptures form one book, but only on the supposition of their divine origin. He who questions their divine authority has no right to deal with them as one book. The very thing the sceptic sets out to disprove is the unity of authorship. He wishes to prove that it is only human, and thus he cannot possibly do, if he holds the unity of authorship, for no one in his senses can believe that all these books were the production of one man. How many centuries would such a man have had to live ? It seems very strange that our unbelieving friends do not see that in treating the Bible as one book they are surrendering their whole position. They wish, for example, to discredit the gospel of Matthew. They do it by criticising the Pentateuch, or the books of Joshua, or Jonah ! Their attempt is manifestly futile, unless they hold that all these books are by the same author, which is the very thing that they deny, and which they must deny to sustain their position, for if they were all by the same author, that author must have been God, and therefore, all of them true. The spiritual unity of the sixty-six books will come before us in due time and in its proper place, but unless we would beg the whole question, we must start with the human authorship in its multiplicity, and see whether we can, by legitimate means, reach the divine authorship in its unity. Meantime what we have to do, is to see whether these numerous books, which are bound together into one volume and called the Bible, really come to us with the authority of those prophets and apostles who were divinely commissioned and inspired to teach men the way of salvation.

Now, inasmuch as we cannot in the space to which we have limited ourselves, take up all the sixty-six books and examine them in detail, to find out whether each of them comes with apostolic or with prophetic authority, we shall have to content ourselves with indi-

cating, in a general way, the nature of the evidence. And, first we shall look at the twenty-seven books which make up the New Testament. It is a common idea that the authority of these twenty-seven books rests upon the decree of some council as far down as the fourth or fifth century. At all events, this idea is industriously circulated on the part of those opposed to Christianity, but I have yet to find the first Christian author, among the Protestant churches, at least, who puts it on this ground. The authority on which the books of the New Testament are accepted is the authority of the apostles, and the authority of the apostles rests upon the authority of Christ.

This makes the question a simple one concerning those books which were the work of the apostles themselves, as the gospels of Matthew and John, and the epistles of Paul and Peter. It becomes, in the case of these, simply a question of their genuineness. As to the other books as the gospels of Mark and Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, and the anonymous epistle to the Hebrews (which may, however, have been written by Paul), there is good evidence that they were all sanctioned by the apostles, if not produced under their superintendence. The apostolic authority of the books—which afterwards were bound together as the New Testament—was carefully guarded from the very earliest times, long before the first council met. Much has been made of the fact that there were disputes as to the authority of certain books, but this only shows that the claim to apostolic authority was not received without good evidence. And these disputes in the early history of the church were only in reference to five of the shortest and least important epistles. From the beginning, twenty-two books were allowed by all to be certainly of apostolic authority, and though afterwards there was some debate about the epistle to the Hebrews—on account of its being anonymous—and the book of Revelation, on the supposition that it might have been some other John than the apostle of that name who wrote it, the very debate about these books had the effect of bringing

out such evidence in favour of their apostolic authority, that the question was set finally at rest. And thus, after careful examination and sifting, the conclusion was reached that the twenty-seven books, now bound together as the New Testament, had the sanction of the apostles, and, therefore, ultimately of Christ Himself.

But then we have not the original manuscripts. Certainly not, no more than we have those of Virgil, or of Juvenal, or of Seneca, or of any who wrote in these times. What evidence, then, have we that our copies are correct? The very same kind of evidence that we have in the case of the classical authors, only ten-fold stronger—for this reason, that the number of copies is so very much greater. We do not pretend that there was any infallibility in the copyists. But, on the whole, the copies must have been wonderfully correct, because among such a multitude there is so much agreement, and the differences are in such little things. Suppose that you had fifty to one hundred fairly good copies of some document, could you not very easily make sure of a correct copy? Even though each one of the fifty made mistakes, they would not all make the same mistakes. If, for example, you found that one of them left out a word, while the other forty-nine put it in, you would have no doubt whatever that it ought to go in. On the other hand, if one inserted a sentence which the other forty-nine left out, you would be inclined to think that that sentence did not belong to the original document. And it is evident, that just in proportion to the number and independence of the different copies would be the certainty that, after comparing them wisely together, you had a correct reproduction of the original.

When, more than one hundred and fifty years ago, it was first made known to the world that the manuscript copies of the Scriptures did not agree in every letter and word, there was a feeling of alarm through all Christendom, and the infidels of the time loudly proclaimed that the end had come, and very soon the

last would be heard of the Christian's Bible. It was all corrupt, they said, and there was no guarantee that the manuscripts remaining were at all the same as the apostolic originals. Then followed the tremendous labour of comparing the manuscripts. "Thirteen to fifteen hundred Greek manuscripts" (I quote from Gaussen), "sought out from all the libraries of Europe and Asia, were carefully compared with one another, word by word, letter by letter, by modern criticism, and compared, too, with all the ancient versions, Latin, Armenian, Syriac, Sahidic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonian, Gothic, and Persian, and with all the quotations made from the New Testament by the ancient Fathers in their innumerable writings." And with what result? The firm establishment of a genuine text, so that still, "over all the world you will see all the sects of Christians, even the most opposite, give us the same Greek Testament, with the various readings having been able to form among them two distinct schools." Thus the very criticism which was expected utterly to demolish the text of the New Testament Scriptures has established it upon an immovable basis. There are, as was to be expected, a few doubtful passages, but these are so few and of such slight importance, that they really do not affect our assurance as to the genuine apostolic teaching. The Revised Version plainly indicates them all, and every one sees that the sum of saving truth would remain the same as ever, though every one of them should be struck out. And thus it has come to pass that after this verbal and critical comparison has said its last word, we have assurance made doubly sure. We have, then, the very best reasons for accepting as authoritative and genuine all the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

And then, in addition, the internal evidence fully corroborates the external. Compare the four apostolic gospels with similar productions that were issued without apostolic sanction, and what a difference! The merest tyro in literary criticism can see it at once. And so, too, when you compare the epistles of Paul with

those, for instance, of Clement Though it is evident that Clement is a good man, he falls so far short in originality and strength of all the Scripture writers, that you recognize him at once as an ordinary author Let any one of even moderate intelligence compare the books of the New Testament with the private productions of even the best of men in the infancy of the Church, and he will readily see the clear line of demarcation which separates that which is apostolic from that which is private

The evidence for the prophetic authority of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament is nearly the same, that it is not necessary to go over the ground There is, of course, the disadvantage of the greater antiquity of the books, which is, however, to a large extent, counterbalanced by the scrupulous and even superstitious care which was taken by all the Hebrew copyists, and the marvellous unanimity of the most opposite sects and parties among the Jews in regard to the text of the Scriptures, and, on the other hand, there is the sanction which Christ Himself and his apostles gave by frequent quotation, and by the unvarying habit of referring to those Scriptures as the oracles of God The result of the whole is, to use the words of one* who made the transmission of ancient books to modern times a special study, the Scriptures have come down to us "with an evidence of their genuineness and integrity ten fold more various, copious, and conclusive than can be adduced in support of any other ancient writing" And thus, quite apart from any decree of any council, unsatisfactorily answered the question, as to what means we have of access to the teachings of the apostles and of Christ Himself and what guarantee we have that what has come down to us is indeed the very truth which they taught when here on earth

This would be the place for discussing the nature and degree of that inspiration which those prophets and apostles enjoyed, on whose authority the sixty-six

* Isaac Taylor.

books of the Old and New Testaments rest. The importance of the question cannot be denied. But we hold that it has been very much exaggerated and that much mischief has been done by pressing particular theories of inspiration, and insisting upon making Christ and Christianity responsible for them. How many, for example, have been led, by popular representations of inspiration, to regard the prophets and apostles as mere machines, mere amanuenses, mere pens in the hand of God, whereas it is quite evident that, whatever the nature and degree of divine influence may have been, it did not destroy their individuality or lessen the value of their manifold witness as authors writing independently. We have already seen how unscriptural it is to suppose that apostles and prophets must have been omniscient, because they were inspired. It would seem, however, that any view of inspiration is practically worthless, which admits of errors in setting forth the very facts and truths which they were commissioned to make known. For how then should we be able to distinguish that which comes to us with divine authority from that which was only a matter of opinion?

On the other hand, we do not think it necessary or wise to insist on infallibility in regard to all subjects incidentally touched. Who would think, for example, that it would have been suitable to have departed from current modes of thought and speech in reference to the supposed immobility of the earth, so as to bring the words into agreement with the astronomic reality of the case? We do not think it necessary even yet to do so, and we very properly set down as pedantic those who try. How much more pedantic and absurd would it have been, when all the world was ignorant of the true facts of the case.

Take the language used about creation as an example. We refer to it because it is more criticised and objected to than anything else in the Scriptures. Now on the supposition that it was necessary to give men some idea of the divine agency in all the wide domain of creation, there were three supposable ways in which it might

have been done First, all wrong scientific notions might have been collected This would have necessitated a long treatise on astronomy, another on geology, another on natural history, with perhaps a lengthy chapter on evolution, long before the world was prepared for anything of the kind This is what many of the scientific objectors of the day seem to think there ought to have been, but is it not absurd?

Or again, the truth might have been taught concerning God's relation to the different parts of creation, in such a way as to conform to the ordinary notions which were current at the time, the object being, not to correct the science of the period, but to set men right as to the religious aspects of the case This is the view taken by many, and we do not think it specially objectionable A moment's thought will show that it would have been a much more reasonable and less pedantic course than the other, which so many unthinking people suppose ought to have been taken

But there is a third way, and we think that somewhere in its direction lies the true account of the matter The language may have been chosen, so as to conflict neither with the ideas then prevalent, nor, speaking generally, with the actual verities of the case The result would be, that the people who lived during the fifty-five centuries, more or less, before Copernicus, would have some chance to understand it, though, of course, they would understand it in conformity with their own ideas on scientific subjects, that is to say, they would get true religious ideas from it, but their scientific notions would remain unchanged In such a case, however, when the scientific truth was at last discovered, there would at first be an impression, that the Bible was on the side of the old ideas, but, on close examination, it would be found that, while nothing had been said to disturb the minds of men when there was no occasion for it, and only harm could result from it, the language used was really such as to be in general harmony with the actual facts of the case

This view of the case I am disposed to take, not because I think the second a dangerous or unworthy view, but because I cannot otherwise account for the many wonderful harmonies with science, which careful investigation has brought out. Let any one read the works of such eminent scientific men as Principal Dawson or Professor Dana, which bring out the wonderful harmonies of that old record with modern science, and he will see reason for believing that, however little the original author of the first chapter of Genesis may have known of science, he was so guided by some heavenly inspiration as to "build better than he knew." This illustration may serve to show, that the relation of inspiration to the science, or want of science, of the times, when the different Scriptures were composed, may well be left an open question, so long as the plenary view, is held in relation to the great subjects and objects of revelation, as set forth in that passage of Scripture which is more explicit than any other on the subject. "The holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished"—not unto all scientific disquisitions—but "unto all good works."

II —THE ONE BOOK.

IN dealing with the Scriptures as ordinary productions, so as to ascertain their value and credibility, historically considered, we have seen that it is unfair to treat them as if the whole formed only one book. Remember that no one denies their human authorship. And so long as we are dealing with these books as the productions of human authors, it is manifestly unjust to disregard the confluence of testimony from so many different points. But, while we never dream of denying the human authorship, we maintain that this is not the whole account of the matter, that there is a divine

element running through all, and that, therefore, the boards of the bookbinder are not the only bond which binds these different books together into unity. The multiplicity of the books is a patent fact, which every one can see who has only common sense enough not to confound together authorship and bookbinding, and which would never be forgotten, if it were not convenient sometimes to do so, in order to weaken the historical basis of Christianity. But the unity of the books is something which lies deeper, the recognition of which requires some power to appreciate spiritual and divine things, but when once it is recognized, it adds so immensely to the strength of the historical argument, as to give perfect assurance to those who see it. We can, as usual, only present it in briefest outline.

Keeping in mind then, the evidence we have from history that, these Scriptures now in our hands have come to us with the authority of the prophets and apostles, guaranteed by Christ Himself, it is now in order to look into them, and see if their contents correspond with what we should expect of writings so highly authenticated. You will see that we are now in the same attitude in which we found ourselves when dealing with the second part of our argument. After satisfying ourselves that the claim was distinctly made by Jesus of Nazareth, that He was the Messiah sent to reveal the Father, we inquired how His life and words bore out the claim. Now, in this third part of the argument, having satisfied ourselves that these books before us are the very books which come to us with prophetic and apostolic authority, we now proceed to inquire how far an examination of their contents bears out their claim. And here again we shall follow the same method. We shall raise the question as to what we should reasonably expect of such books, and if we find all reasonable expectations realised, surely it will be but fair to grant that the claim is established.

What, then, may we reasonably expect of these books, if it be true that they come to us, not as mere

human productions, but as 'given by inspiration of God?'

1 We should expect that, amid all diversity of matter and of form, there would be unity of spirit. And is it not so? Think for a moment how appropriate is the name "Holy Bible" as a title of the entire collection. Mr. Matthew Arnold has shown how the idea of righteousness is the central idea of the Old Testament, and it is well worth pondering how far this single fact may go toward proving the presence of a divine element throughout. But the fact is much stronger than he puts it, for it is not righteousness in the common acceptation of the word, which might readily be supposed to cover only those virtues, which the common conscience of mankind, always and everywhere, more or less demands, but it is *holiness*, something much higher, purer and more comprehensive, which is the key-note of the Bible from beginning to end. Even in the rude Mo-*ra*-ic age when the state of society was such that many things, far from ideally right, had to be allowed to the people 'for the hardness of their hearts,' when many of the political regulations reflected the imperfect spirit of the times, dealing as such regulations sought always to deal with the practicable rather than the ideal,—even then we see, shining on the mitre of the high priest, the plate of pure gold with this inscription 'Holiness to the Lord.' And the attentive student finds the conviction growing upon him that, while the external history was very much what would be expected of the age, and the political regulations had to a certain extent to conform thereto, yet "the law" proper, in its moral and ceremonial requirements, held up perfect holiness as an ideal before the people. And the key-note struck by the law, and adopted by all the prophets, is taken up in a tenderer, sweeter, strain by Christ himself, and prolonged by the holy apostles, until at the close of the book of Revelation, we are greeted by the sacred harmonies of the holy city, "where there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth," but over which

reigns the "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" Can you fail to recognize the unity here? And, observe, it is not mere unity, but unity of the most elevated kind, having the divine signet upon it, for, indeed, it may be questioned whether this idea of perfect holiness, which runs like a golden thread through all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, ever entered into the minds of the most cultivated nations of the ancient world, or into the mind of man at all from any other source.

Again, there is not only one purpose—the loftiest and purest, and noblest that could be conceived—running through all the Scriptures, but there is one plan for the realizing of this purpose. When we look at the means provided for making men holy, we find, not a great many different suggestions from different minds, as we should expect from authors, so diverse in their talents, temperaments, education, and surroundings, and so far separated from each other in time, but one consistent plan of a kingdom of God, the standard of which is holiness, and its method mercy,—mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace embracing each other, as it is put in the expressive language of the 85th Psalm. This wonderful unity is one which it would require volumes to develope, but we can only suggest it here.

And in the same way it will be found, that all the main thoughts which are expressed by the different authors on the great subjects of revelation—God, man, duty, goodness, sin, salvation—instead of presenting that conflict which you always find, when human philosophy without special divine aid attempts to discuss such questions, are so fully in accord that, as we have seen, it is difficult, even for those who deny the divine element in the Scriptures, to avoid treating the whole collection as if it were the production of one man.

Finally, there is that most wonderful unity of all, referred to by our Lord Himself, which appears when you recognise the great fact, that all the manifold witnesses of the books converge on Christ. Here, again,

the field is too wide to enter upon, but those who examine it will find it a most fruitful field of investigation. And so conclusive is the argument based upon it, that the only thing infidelity can do in the matter is to take up, in succession, the most striking passages which set forth the hope of a coming Saviour, and explain them away as best it can—a task which must remain for ever hopeless, for this most weighty reason, that the ancient Jews themselves understood them in their Messianic sense*. And it only shows the desperate straits to which infidelity is reduced in dealing with his subject, when its advocates are constrained to impose a forced and unnatural meaning on a whole series of passages in different books of the Old Testament, though the testimony of those who lived nearest the time is against them, and though Christ Himself, whom they profess to regard as the most intelligent Jew of His age, understood and expounded them as applying to Himself. As for the modern Jews who reject Christ, they of course join with the infidels in getting rid of the Messianic element in those passages, for the very good reason that it is only in this way that they can reject the New Testament while retaining the Old. Thus, all through the Old Testament there is a convergence of hope, looking for the coming Christ, and all through the New there is a convergence of faith resting on the Christ who has come and fulfilled "the hope of Israel,"—a unity which fully harmonizes with the claim the Apostle Peter advances on behalf of the prophets, when he speaks of them as "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Thus, in every way, the unity of spirit which the theory of inspiration calls for, is fully borne out by a careful examination of the numerous books of the Old and New Testaments.

* For a full and learned presentation of this subject, see Westcott's 'Introduction to the Study of the Gospels,' chap. 11.

2 We should expect, further, if the claim of inspiration is well founded, that though the authors, as men, must necessarily have been moulded and controlled by their times and surroundings, yet their productions would have a large element of universal adaptation in them. And is it not so? Is it not so to a degree that is altogether unaccountable, apart from some influence of the Spirit of God?

Think, first, how every part of our complex nature is powerfully appealed to the conscience, the intellect, the affections, the imagination, the will.*

Think, next, of the adaptation to different classes of men. Have not the most cultured and the most simple-minded, the highest, and the lowest, the richest, and the poorest, found here, as nowhere else, a satisfaction for the wants of their natures? It is to no purpose to point to any number of cultured persons who reject the Bible and speak slightly of it, for the mere fact that they reject it is a sufficient reason why they cannot be expected to appreciate it. The question is not, what satisfaction it gives to those who will have nothing to do with it, but how it meets the wants of those who put it to the proof, who take it as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path, and it cannot be denied that while one of the glories of the Gospel is, that it is preached specially to the poor, and another is, that even the little children have their portion in it, and quite a large one, too, as our Sunday School experience fully shows, many of the most scholarly and highly-cultivated of men have confessed its unequalled adaptation to their wants.

Think, further, of its adaptation to all the different circumstances of life. All experienced Christians can set their seal to the following testimony of Archbishop Trench, in his lecture on the inexhaustibility of Scripture: "What an interpreter of Scripture is affliction! How many stars in its Heaven shine out

* Among American writers see President Hopkins on the "Evidences," Lect. V, for a full and forceful presentation of this point.

brightly in the night of sorrow or of pain . . .
 What an enlarger of Scripture is any other outer or inner event which stirs the depths of our hearts, which touches us near to the core and centre of our lives. Trouble of spirit, condemnation of conscience, pain of body, sudden danger, strong temptation—when any of these overtake us, what veils do they take away that we may see what hitherto we saw not, what new domains of God's word do they bring within our spiritual ken? How do promises, which once fell flat upon our ears, become precious now, psalms become our own, our heritage for ever, which before were aloof from us.

How much, again, do we see in our ripe age, which in youth we missed or passed over. And thus; on these accounts also, the Scripture is well fitted to be our companion and do us good all the years of our life."

Let us still further think of its adaptation to different nations and races of men. Our religion is really, the only catholic religion, our Bible the only collection of sacred books that has proved its adaptation to peoples the most widely separated from each other. No two civilizations could be more widely separated than the Oriental civilization, out of the bosom of which the books of the Bible sprang, and that Western Civilization, which is founded on it and has grown out of it. And it has been proved to be adapted, not only to the most diverse civilizations, but even to barbarism itself, for some of the most wonderful trophies of the elevating, purifying, exalting influences of the Bible have been found among the most degraded races on the face of the earth. The more you investigate the matter, the more you will be convinced that, while it was indeed true that Christ "came unto His own and His own received Him not," and that many of every nation to whom He has come have received Him not, yet to "as many as received Him," of whatever nation, kindred, people, or tongue, "to them gave He power to become the sons of Gods." The wild Hottentot, if only he receives Christ, becomes so elevated and purified thereby

as to be in a position to vindicate his claim to be a son of God, no less than the best of us

The adaptation of the Bible to all successive ages of the world's history might close this series, were it not that it introduces us to a new feature which deserves separate consideration, viz —

3 The progressiveness of the Bible The unity of tone and tenour, of purpose, and spirit, and plan, which we find throughout the Bible, is not a dead but a living unity It is a unity of progress, of development There was evidently an educational development along the line of the Scripture history, the study of which is both interesting and instructive There was also a germinating, and springing, a budding, and blossoming of that hope of Israel which found its fruitage in "the fulness of the time," when God sent His Son into the world There was development of doctrine, too, not only throughout the long ages of the Old Testament, but even in the brief compass of the New, as is most beautifully and convincingly shown by Canon Bernard in his Bampton Lectures for 1867

And then, though the canon of Scripture has been so long complete, it is a remarkable fact that, as progress is made in other things, fresh discoveries are being made in this inexhaustible mine Just as in Nature many things continue hidden from the ages and generations, until the appointed time comes round, and a Newton or a Darwin makes patent what has long been latent, so is it in Scripture And thus it comes to pass that the Bible is always in advance of the age, just as Nature is always in advance of the science of the age What is more characteristic of the advance of religious thought in the present century than the development of that charity and liberality which for many centuries were so conspicuously absent But when we open the Bible, lo! charity and liberality shine on the face of it so brightly, that it is almost incredible that centuries should have passed before this was recognized It has been beautifully suggested that much of the truth which the Bible contains

has been written as it were, with sympathetic ink invisible until the time should come when the world was ready to receive a new heritage of truth. This wonderful progressiveness in the Bible leads us to a fourth point, viz —

4 What the Bible has to say about the future. And here we might reasonably expect that there would be some provision made to meet that want of our nature which yearns to know something of what lies within the veil. On the other hand, we should not reasonably expect that such a revelation of the future would be given, as would satisfy only an idle curiosity. Revelation, with reticence, then, is what we should expect. And is it not even so? The prophetic element of Scripture has for its consistent aim from beginning to end, not the gratification of a prying curiosity, but the practical object of warning, guiding, and comforting those to whom it was given, and supplying them with motives for personal holiness and ardent devotion to the best interest of their fellow men. Hence an intentional vagueness and indefiniteness in prophetic language. But, notwithstanding this, there has been already such a marked fulfilment of a large number of prophecies, that strong arguments for the inspiration of the Scriptures have been founded on this alone. The constant attempt of unbelievers has been to bring down the date of the prophecies, so as to give plausibility to the supposition that, the "fulfilment" came before the "prophecy," or else, to explain the correspondence by the notion of shrewd guesses, or far-sighted prognostication. But let any one study the subject candidly and thoroughly, and he will see that after all the cases are set aside in regard to which any reasonable doubt can be suggested, there remain, to support the claim of inspiration, a sufficient number of unmistakable prophecies, which could not possibly have been written after the event.

But the special point now before us is concerned rather with that which is still in the future, and especially with those revelations of the world beyond the grave

which we find in scanty measure, but in growing clearness, till, in the end, we rest with delight on the glowing imagery of the closing chapters of the Apocalypse. Now, if any one will contrast these reticent and reserved unveilings of the future with the corresponding teachings of the Koran, for instance, or the Buddhist sacred books, the vast difference between them will become very apparent. Here, as everywhere in the Scriptures, the moral impression is every thing, the gratification of curiosity, or of sensual desire, is not contemplated at all.

The subject is really exhaustless. As we said at the outset, some powers of appreciation are needed to see the force of such considerations, but, given these powers of appreciation, and we are confident that, the longer the subject is studied, the stronger will the proof appear, that the Bible is more than a collection of ordinary books bound together, that it is indeed what it claims to be—the work of “holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

And now what is there to be said on the other side? What can the infidel bring forward, to counterbalance the mass of evidence which we have only hinted at in the briefest way? A series of objections and difficulties, founded on particular passages, and appealing, for the most part, to our ignorance. Now, we do not say that these objections and difficulties are all paltry. Far from it. Many of them are still, a considerable number are undoubtedly hard to deal with. But what of that? Is it not just what was to have been expected?

Is Nature free from difficulties? And yet does the presence of these difficulties prove that it is not divine in its origin? There is a superficial roughness and ruggedness in many parts of the Bible, but that does not prove there are not mines of wealth under the surface, any more than the roughness of Colorado proves it to be a God-forsaken country, as some represented it to be, before its hidden riches were disclosed. Just as in the investigation of Nature, so in the study of the Bible, labour is needed, patience is needed, sympathy is needed, but, when these are exercised, difficulties rapid-

ly disappear, and if any still remain hard and insoluble, yet, having so very much on which to build a solid faith, we can well afford to wait, to suspend our judgment on some points, if need be, feeling fully assured that what we know not now we shall know hereafter.

Our treatment of so wide a subject in limits so narrow must necessarily be exceedingly inadequate, but, even little as we have said, there has been enough to show that, difficulties included, these books of the Old and New Testaments are just what we should reasonably expect them to be—as inspired productions, and, therefore, to the strong external evidence previously presented, must be added the still stronger internal evidence, that these Scriptures are in very deed the oracles of God

all his works it is as a loving, self-conscious, and independent Person, and while His wisdom, power, goodness, and unity are stamped on all his works, He must not be worshipped by means of any image of anything in heaven or on earth. Christ insists on the law of Moses being kept in its integrity. He accepts the description given of God in the Mosaic law as "a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exod xxxiv 6-7). Throughout all His teaching, Christ builds upon the doctrine of "the Law and the prophets, which" He came to fulfil—not in any way to destroy.

While Jesus frequently speaks of the Supreme Being as God, He more often refers to Him as Father. He teaches his disciples to address Him, "Our Father who art in heaven." He, however, draws a very clear and distinct line between God's fatherhood to himself, his fatherhood to those who love him, and his fatherhood to the human race. Of this last, founded simply on creation, and where the spiritual bond is wanting, He makes very little. Of the second, where the moral and spiritual relationship is real, He makes much more,—where there is family likeness and filial fellowship. Of those who do not possess this He hesitates not to say—"Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." When they claimed to be Abraham's children, He replied—"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," and elsewhere, He says—"The field is the world and the good seed, these are the seeds of the kingdom and the tares are the sons of the evil one" (Matt xiii 38). Of those here spoken of as tares, He also speaks as lost sons, over the recovery of any one of whom there is joy in the father's heart in Heaven in the presence of the angels of God (Luke xv). But Jesus over and over again persists on a relationship between himself and the

Father transcending altogether that between God and any creature

Jesus accepts the attributes of God as described in the Old Testament, His Almighty Power, His Infinite Wisdom, His Burning Holiness, His Eternal Justice, and His boundless Goodness and Truthfulness, but He delights to dwell on the fact that He is a Spirit, and that His worship must be Spiritual and True, that He is love, full of long-suffering compassion, and grace, and that He is the fountain of all good gifts "Be ye merciful," says He "even as your Father is merciful" (Luke vi 36) While God knows all things, and has an eternal plan, in accordance with which all events are regulated, and all things are possible to Him, and He rules over all so as to bring to pass whatever He pleases, He puts in man's possession a will with which man may rebel against Him, and can say "We will not have Him reign over us" His rule is according to absolute justice—every deed receiving at His hand according to its merits By prayer and otherwise, He has intercourse and fellowship with His own children on earth It is His desire that they thus commune with Him He answers the prayers of those who put a childlike trust in Him Jesus himself thus continually communed with the Father

While the unity of the Godhead is clearly taught by Christ, yet it is a unity that is compatible, not only with His teaching that He and the Father are one, but also with His speaking of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, and of His saying that the Father would give the Spirit as the equivalent of all good gifts (Matt vii 11 and Luke xi 13) He says that by the Spirit, of God, He cast out devils, and that by the Spirit of the Father, His disciples would speak when arraigned before governors and kings for His sake (Matt x 19-20) While ready to forgive sins committed against the Father or against Himself He announces that sins or certain sins against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven (Matt x 32)

In His institution of the rite of initiation into His Church called baptism Jesus says that His disciples would be baptised in the name of Father, Son and Spirit

Just as Jesus represents the Father as moved by love to send His own Son to save lost sinners. so also under the same love is the Spirit sent by Father and Son to regenerate and sanctify dead corrupt men, and to apply to their souls the salvation wrought in their stead by Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God and the Son of Man

Jesus had great affection for men individually, and for the human race as a whole. He always associated with men. He did not go to live in the desert, on the mountains or in the jungles as a monk, rishi or hermit living in solitary places. In men's company He talked to them. He was not buried in His own thoughts, forgetful of the men and women who lived and moved about Him. In His conversations with them, He was not taken up with abstract thought or with what concerned only Himself. Almost all His talk concerned them, their happiness and their well-being. In His interests and sympathies, old and young, rich and poor, male and female, had a share proportionate to their just claims, but often in inverse ratio to the share they had in the interest and sympathies of the world. The rich, the adult, the male did not, with him as with other teachers obtain the lion's share to the exclusion of the poor, the children and women. While not forgetful of the former, he was specially mindful of the latter. His comparing the men and women of his time, under his instruction to children in the marketplace who *would not* be interested, despite all the efforts of the others, shows how desirous he was to secure the interest and sympathy of his fellow men (Matt xi 16 17). So also his pleasure at the children's song of praise, and his answer to the indignant question of the priests and scribes—'Hear'st thou what these are saying?'—'Yea, did ye never read 'Out

of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt xxi 16, Ps viii 2) Only once do we read of his being displeased with anything done to Himself—and that once was when an attempt was made to prevent the little children's approach to him and then, it is said that, "He was much displeased" He valued the society of children He loved them, among other things for their receptiveness, their trustfulness and humility He proclaimed his kingdom through them He wept in sympathy with his bereaved friends at Lazarus' grave, and also over the sufferings, threatening the much loved city of Jerusalem

Deeply as Christ valued the lily of the field, the flower of the grass, and the buds of the anemone, the ox and ass of the stall, all of them the works of His Father in heaven, and bearing the impress of His workmanship, He valued infinitely higher the human beings around Him, however low they might be in social rank and power These latter were made in God's image, and made to love and serve Him

In each member of the race, Jesus recognised the material and the spiritual, spoken of as body and soul, or body, soul and spirit, or flesh and spirit, as in His words—"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", but He never countenanced the thought that sin was in the body only and not in the spirit too On the other hand, He expressly connects the sin with the emotional part of our nature, the will, spoken of as the "heart," as when he says (while repudiating the idea that the material food or drink, of which we partake, could possibly defile)—"Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings, these are the things which defile the man, but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not the man" It was the spiritual, corrupted, and foolish soul, which was responsible for using the body for improper and unholy purposes, and which also prevented the better part of man's nature

from believing or receiving the truth "O foolish men," he said on another occasion, "and slow of heart to believe" It was the folly and slowness of heart which he held responsible for their want of faith In the spiritual nature, he saw not only the understanding and the emotions, or heart and will, but also what we call the moral faculty or conscience, which he describes as the eye or lamp of the soul, the inner light, in such a passage as—"The lamp of the body is the eye if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness," referring to a seared or blinded conscience under the influence of a perverted will and a corrupted heart

In contrast with this He speaks of a heart prepared for the seed of the Kingdom, and producing abundantly, as it were, of itself but where there has been no preparation, as in fallow land, in hard, stony land, or down trodden land like the road or walk, and in jungly land overrun with thorns and briars, there can be no proper receptiveness, and consequently no fruitfulness On the stones, the weeds and the jungle being removed and the earth being broken up and watered, true receptiveness will take place, and there will be much fruit All hearts have to be subjected to this process of preparation See His parable of the sower and the seed

This process of preparation consists partly in man being awakened to reflection—they must have ears to hear, and the owners must be stirred up to listen. But there are many who think they hear, but really do not, they think they see, but they perceive not, because their hearts are waxed gross and their ears dull of hearing (Matt xiii 14-15) Hence He pressed upon the people the necessity of their giving a solemn consideration to what they heard, and how they heard On placing the truth with great clearness before them by means of illustrations, parables, and

otherwise, He appeals to their own natural understanding and feeling as responsible to God, and He asks them to apply their own reason and intelligence to the matter before them—"Why, even of yourselves," says He, "judge ye not what is right?"

Knowing well that moral turpitude blinds the intellect, He places higher importance upon the purity of the heart than on the strength of the intellect

Sin practised often,—experience shows—
Men's understanding steals at length

Jesus promises a blessing to the poor in spirit and to the pure in heart, but no special blessing to the profoundly intellectual (Matt v 3-8) He speaks of the good treasure of the heart rather than of the abundant stores of the memory or of the cultured intellect (Luke vi 45)

Man is in possession of free will. Life and death are set before him, and a choice or option is given to him. A narrow road leading ultimately to holiness and happiness, and a wide and apparently smooth road leading in the end to ruin and destruction, invite him, and he can choose which he likes, and alas, many choose the latter to their everlasting perdition. In all this, lies their responsibility in light and darkness presenting themselves, and in their choosing the latter, because their deeds are evil. The voluntariness or spontaneity of their choice of the evil is their sin. Jesus represents men on earth as so infatuated, that, refusing to hear Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded to forsake the evil and turn to the good, even though one rose from the dead and reported to them the wretched condition of the impenitent.

Jesus did not believe in the transmigration of souls from one body to another in successive lives, nor did He believe in the *karma* or moral consequences of one's actions passing at his death into another person, but he did believe in the transmission of the moral effects of one's actions from father to son and on to grandson through various generations. He believed

in God "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate him, and showing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love Him and keep His commandments" Hence he tells the Pharisees that by their evil conduct they witnessed to their descent from evil parentage and he adds—"Fill up then the measure of your fathers, that upon you may come the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of Abel, the righteous, unto the blood of Zachariah" He believed in the scientific law of heredity as seen in individuals, families, nations and races, and also in the solidarity of the race as descended from a common ancestry. More of this below.

Jesus teaches the immortality of the human soul as opposed to the teaching of the agnostic Sadducees of His day. He told them not to be afraid of mere bodily discomforts, or even of bodily death, or of those who inflicted such, but to fear him who has power to punish the soul after death (Luke xii 1-5). See also the picture given of such suffering in the case of the rich man at whose gate Lazarus lay (Luke xvi 19-26). The Sadducees' denial of the resurrection was, he tells us, founded on ignorance of the teaching and the power of God. To the true worshipper of God, an earnest of the future life is given in the sweet communion with God, which he enjoys even on earth at times of great spiritual elevation.

Not only is man's nature such that, by fit and proper preparation, his soul may receive the seeds of the life eternal and produce fruit to give satisfaction to his Owner and Maker, but he stands in absolute need of this preparation. In other words, he is a sinner in the sight of God and of his own enlightened understanding. Christ had a profound sense of the sinfulness of man, and of the heinousness of sin as committed against the infinitely holy and loving Father in Heaven. The prayer He taught His disciples begins with the petition that God's name may be hal-

lowed, that His kingdom may come, and His will be done on earth as in heaven, and ends with the prayer that his sins or debts may be forgiven, that he may not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil or from sin in its personified form. While acknowledging the heart of one man as honorable and good as contrasted with that of another man whose heart is only evil, He does not admit of any heart being absolutely pure, save His own. Contrasting men with God, he says, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke x 13). He represents His own one great object in coming to this world to be to heal the sick, or as otherwise expressed, to call sinners to repentance. And while admitting that certain Scribes and Pharisees acted as if they claimed to be not sinners but righteous, it is very clear, from the severity of His language towards them, that He regarded them as Paul called himself—the chief of sinners. It was His own disciples, whom He taught continually to pray after this fashion—"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." The elder brother in the parable is represented about as far from sinlessness, as he who spent his father's property with harlots (Luke xv). Nay, more, he emphatically declares that no one is good save God only. Hence it was that he called on all and sundry, without exception, to repent and believe in the gospel, or in the good news of salvation from sin in all its forms.

Then sinfulness he attributes not to the body, hence he does not demand corporal penances, or mortifications of the body, or a change, or a getting rid of the body by transmigrations, or otherwise, and sin is not confined to the external action. It includes the sentiment or state of feeling pervading the entire inner life, as may be seen from the whole teaching of his Sermon on the Mount and of his words in Matt xxii 37-40, and the new Commandment of which he speaks

in John xiii 34 Of course such an understanding as to the nature of sin, makes works of supererogation impossible, whether Hindu or Roman Catholic The heart idolatry of riches was condemned by Christ, and it apparently cost the young man eternal life (Matt xiv 21) And even the servants who have done all, are but "unprofitable servants" No works of merit can be stored up

Jesus attributes the sinfulness to the heart or will, hence he demands a change of heart and a sacrifice of the will to God's The badness of the heart and will he traces, as far as external influences are concerned, to the Evil One The enemy that sowed the evil seeds is the Devil (Matt xiii 39) "Satan," said Jesus, to Peter, "asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat, but I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii 32) All men are here liable to be tempted by the evil seductions of the devil, the weakness or lusts of the flesh, and by the evil desires of the heart His prayer, recommended to all, is "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" Those who yield unresistingly to the temptations become so obdurate that they are by Christ termed "Children of the wicked one" (Matt xiii 38)

The nature of sin, or the sinful principle which underlies every sinful act, is selfishness, or a heart or will not loyal to God, the lusting after something displeasing to God and hurtful to man Jesus summarises the whole law to which man is subject into the two commandments (1) "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with thy mind," and (2) "Love thy neighbour as thyself" "On these two commandments," said he, "hang the whole law and the prophets" The falling short in any way in doing all this is sin, the doing of anything contrary to the letter or spirit of this is transgression The condition or state of all men is unrighteous and lawless They are described as liars, workers of iniquity, offenders, unregenerated, their hearts

not changed, or in other words they have not repented "Except a man be born anew," said Jesus, to Nicodemus, "he cannot see the kingdom of God," repeated in greater fulness in the words—"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" In Matt iii 3, he speaks of the necessity of being baptised "with the Holy Ghost and with fire"—water and fire being symbolical of the purifying agency of the Spirit of God As water washes our bodies and fire purifies precious metals, gold and silver, so the Spirit of God purifies and sanctifies our souls and fits them for God's kingdom

The action of the sinful principle on the soul is beautifully illustrated in the sketch given by Jesus of the Prodigal Son His heart first of all becomes selfish and alienated from his father, he then separates himself from him, and seeks freedom from him and his law, and then rapidly proceeds downwards from one stage of wickedness to another His return is again made to hang on a change of heart towards his father He sees the love and consequent liberality of his father, and makes up his mind to turn back to him His condition during the time of his disloyalty is truly wretched in spite of his fancied bliss

Though many try to be loyal to God and at the same time allow their own hearts to be filled with the earthly and the carnal pleasures of this world, the attempt inevitably fails "No one," says Jesus, "can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matt vi 24) Men so alienated from God are described as sick, needing a physician, lost sheep in search of whom the good shepherd wanders, and even dead (Luke xvi 24) In reference to such he uses the expression—"Let the dead bury their dead" Yet he recognises degrees of sinfulness and of guilt—the ignorant who know not what they are doing are not

to be confounded with those who sin against light, love, and knowledge,—a state of things which descends into the obduracy of heart which is described by Christ himself as sin absolutely unpardonable. The 'speaking against the Holy Spirit,' he tells us, is a sin "which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come."

This obduracy of heart overtakes men who persist in rejecting the truth originating, it may be, in idle indifference or disinclination, and growing, alas! in many cases into positive dislike and a stolid closing of the heart against the truth, and even bitter hostility to it and to those who preach it. It was of these also he said—"Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath" (Matt xiii 12). Man first shuts his eyes and persists in keeping them shut. After a time they cannot be opened. He is blind. So man closes his heart against God and his truth, and it is eternally closed.

Jesus speaks in the plainest terms of the punishment men's sins deserve, and which, if not forgiven, will be inflicted of course always strictly commensurate with man's guilt and man's privileges. "That servant," says he, "who knew his Lord's will and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." But he repudiated the idea that all the sufferings endured in this life by any individual man are to be accounted for by that man's sins, or as unconnected with another man's. The eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam in Jerusalem fell, were not to be regarded as greater sinners than all other men in Jerusalem (Luke xiii). Nor was the fact of a child's being born blind to be explained by the child, or his parents having sinned in a previous life, as many here would believe (John ix 1-4). Still, child and parents were sinners, so were all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. To the best, as well as to the worst, one course, one

way, and only one way, is open, and that is to the mercy seat of God. Of the Publican, who smote his breast, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," Jesus says that he went down to his house justified rather than the man who claimed to be not an extortioner, unjust, or an adulterer, who fasted twice in the week and gave tithes of all that he had, and thought himself above the need of repentance or forgiveness. All require forgiveness, or the gracious remission on the part of God of the punishment deserved by their sins.

This forgiveness God is able to bestow upon them through Christ Jesus, because He, "the Son of Man," came to give his life a ransom for them (Matt xx 28, Mark x 45), or, as he elsewhere expresses it, because his blood was "the blood of the covenant shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt xxvi 28, Mark xxi 24). Of so great a value did he consider his death from this point of view that he instituted one of the two external rites or ceremonies of his Church in commemoration of it and took bread and broke it, saying—"This is," or represents, "my body which is given for you." Hence he speaks of himself as the Living Bread broken for men, and as the Good Shepherd who gave his life for his sheep the way to the Father and the door to his kingdom. The fact that his death was for them, he teaches in the words recorded by John—"As I have loved you, greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "And for their sakes I consecrate (or devote to death) myself that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John xv 13, xvii 19). In this way atonement was made, or satisfaction given to law and justice for their sins, and forgiveness is bestowed on all who repent and turn to God.

But without forgiveness man has to look forward to a fearful day of judgment and a subsequent eternity of misery. Founded on the mode in which the Jews of Jerusalem burned the town refuse, much of it in a state of decomposition, in the valley of Gehenna, he figuratively describes the punishment as if

in the unquenchable fire of Gehenna, and by the worm that dieth not and as there is in all things within our ken in this world, a tendency towards a fixity, we are led, independent of Jesus' teaching, to the same conclusion—that unless a revolution is effected the longer men are in repenting and in obtaining forgiveness the less likely is it that they shall ever obtain such, and the stronger the chains of sin shall bind them. The day or point of time at which man's destiny is fixed is the hour of death, and this is formally proclaimed on the great day of judgment at which Jesus himself shall preside in all his glory. "These," said Jesus, referring to the wicked before him on that day "shall go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt xxv 46).

Of the blessedness of the righteous he does not say much. He told his disciples that he ascended to the Father to prepare mansions for them, and that he will come for them, so that where he is, there they may be also in conscious communion with him and with the Father throughout all eternity. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him' (1 Cor ii 9).

We know not O' we know not,
 What joys await us there,
 What radiance of glory
 What bliss beyond compare

In order to attain to this bliss he asks all men to follow him. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," are his words. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me' (Matt. xvi 24 and parallel passages in Mark and Luke). 'My sheep,' says he elsewhere, "hear my voice and I know them and they follow me" (John, x 27). 'If any serve me let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the

Father honour " On this following of him he sets so very high a value that he says—"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me " As an external sign of this following of him and of one's washing as it were in his blood by the Spirit of God, all his followers are asked to be baptised in his name And all such are asked to go about and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things "whatsoever he commanded them," in the assured confidence that he would be with them "always unto the end of the world" (Matt xxviii 19-20)

Jesus was prophesied of as "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and he was called Jesus, because he "saves his people from their sins" He well knew grief, sorrow and suffering He knew their nature, their causes, their consequences He came to save from these as well as from all sin

His own great sufferings at his death are spoken of as his "passion" He was very sensitive to the existence of suffering in the world around him, and sympathetic towards all sufferers He dropped the tear over Lazarus' grave and over suffering Jerusalem, and he groaned in spirit over the sorrowing bereaved sister, and stooped down in grief over the woman taken in adultery, saying to her accusers—"He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her"—and to herself, "Go thy way, from henceforth sin no more" One great object of his life was to alleviate suffering. He went about curing all manner of diseases He delighted to speak of himself as a physician He delighted also in humble loving service for the comfort of his brethren of the human family, even to the washing of their feet, and he taught his disciples to follow his example He taught that the second table of the law was summed up in the commandment "Love thy neighbour

as thy self," and he illustrated his meaning by the parable of the good Samaritan, who relieved the suffering of the man who fell among thieves, was stripped of his garment, wounded, and left half-dead. He talked much of suffering, the sufferings arising from deceptions, wars, and rumours of wars, from nation and kingdom rising against one another, from famines, poverty, pestilences, earthquakes, afflictions of various kinds, hatreds, diseases, losses, ingratitude, false friends, death, demoniacal possessions, lunacies, folly, he spoke of mental grief and bodily pain, sufferings that come upon the wicked because of their wickedness, and which the wicked inflict on the good because they are good, sufferings which people bring upon themselves, sufferings which they inherit, and sufferings which could not by the sufferer or his friends be traced to any known wickedness. Of all these he spoke, often and much. He was much more alive to the sufferings of the human race than any reformer (Buddha not excepted) who had preceded him or has since followed him. This was seen not by his words of love and sympathy, or by his tears and groans of pity and compassion only, but also by the daily and hourly deeds he performed for the rescuing of the perishing, the curing of diseases, the comforting of the afflicted and the strengthening of all against the depressing effects of suffering and sorrow. "Be comforted, be not troubled, peace be with you." These and the like were his frequent words to suffering mankind. More than this, he told them of the cause of their sufferings and also of the remedy and cure, and how it was to be applied.

Jesus did not, however, tell them that its cause was simply desire, good and bad, nor did he tell them to go at once and extirpate all desire in their breasts. He did not tell them that all sufferings came to them in connection with the *karma* or fruit, good or bad, of deeds done in former lives. He never spoke of the transmigration of souls or of the transmission of *karma* from one life to another. Nor did he tell them that suffering arose from individual consciousness, and that only

with the cessation of all consciousness by absorption in God, or identification with God would man be relieved of suffering. He did not connect suffering with the union of soul to body, or the union of the spiritual in us with the material—a theory that was widely popular at one time. None of these theories received any countenance from Jesus of Nazareth.

Believing, however, in the solidarity of the human race, their unity of blood, he taught that the evil in one portion of the race spread its malign influence over many and on every side extending from its various centres of evil hearts with greater or less intensity over neighbouring individuals, and that, in the same way, whatever good was in the race, originating from God and the hearts regenerated by his Spirit, also spread its benign influence on every side in a like manner.

While Jesus admitted that there were sufferings like those of them on whom the tower of Siloam fell, which could not be traced either to the sins of the sufferers, or to the solidarity of the race, yet he did teach that sufferings were the just punishment of sin, and while sufferings did not arise indifferently from all desires, good and bad, they did naturally arise as the effect of lusting after what was evil or what was justly forbidden, and more particularly as the result of that lusting in a human soul, which issued in separation or alienation from God, in want of loyalty and love to Him, and of submission to His will, while taken up, on the other hand, with its own carnal pleasures and selfish interests. This, according to Jesus, is sin. Originating in the heart and will, it manifests itself in selfish words and deeds. So it worked in the Prodigal.

Jesus defines *law* as love to God and love to our neighbour. Both tables of the law are expressed in the one word *love*. But sin is *law*-lessness, that is, *love*-lessness. Jesus told the people that sin first of all manifested itself in selfishness and self-will, as illustrated in the request of the younger son in the parable, that to him be given his own share in the paternal property. So also our first parents were concerned about

enjoying what was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, desirable to make one wise, and seemingly fit to make them as gods, ignoring altogether the fact, that not only had they no right to it, but that it was absolutely forbidden to them by One whom they were bound by every reason to love, and by gratitude to obey. Sin originated in this selfishness, ignoring the claims of God the heavenly Father, and being taken up altogether with ourselves and our own fancied bliss or happiness. The springs or sources of life are corrupted by the ejection of love and the intrusion of self, and the sources being corrupt, the issues of life became corrupt too.

Christ, on the other hand, connects his own holiness with his seeking not his own will or his own glory, but the will and the glory of his Father (Matt xx 28, LXXI 39, John v 30, vii 18, viii 50). He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, "not as I will," said he to the Father, "but as Thou wilt." Referring to himself, he said, "He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent him, the same is true and no unrighteousness is in him." In other words, as Paul puts it, "Christ pleased not Himself." Thus He evidenced that He was sinless. There was no spark or taint of selfishness in him. Just as Jesus submitted His will to the Father, and pleased not himself, so He taught that every one had to give up his own will and his own desires. "If any man serve me," said he, "let him follow me" (John xii 25, 26). "Whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv 27). Self-seeking must cease and determine before one can be regarded as an out-and-out disciple of Christ, that is, *self*, the root of sin, must be deadened or cauterised. There was nothing in Christ on which Satan's appeal to his selfishness could lay hold when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and said—"To thee will I give all this authority and the glory of them." Christ answered, "It is written—'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve'" (Luke iv 5-7). It is the yielding to such appeals from within or from without that forms

the selfish or sinful character. When the will is won and a decision is recorded by it in the interests of self, Satan has gained the victory, *he* is served rather than God. "I say unto you that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt v 28). Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings, these are the things which defile the man" (Matt xv 19). This is the emphatic and persistent teaching of Jesus. When the evil, or the Evil One, has once got a lodgment in the *heart*, other victories become easy, and the man becomes the servant or slave to sin, and debtor to God and to righteousness (Luke xiii 4, Matt vi 12), with an increasing inability to pay the debt.

"Either," said Jesus, "make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt for the tree is known by its fruit" (Matt xii 33). As the quality of the fruit depends upon the nature of the tree, so man's actions depend on his character or the state of his heart and that, going still further back, depends upon the antecedent individual actions or decisions which went to form the character. The man is made good or bad by good or bad decisions of the heart and will, and on being made good or bad it produces good or bad fruit in the form of good or bad actions. They act and react on one another.

Acts of selfishness are invariably accompanied by acts of alienation from God—there is no longer a *cleaving to* God but a wilful *turning away from* God, as Jesus taught in the parable of the prodigal—and this turning away from God is frequently followed by a strong fear and aversion, God and His Son becoming "signs spoken against," as taught in the parable of the householder who planted the vineyard (Matt xxi 38-39). In the words of the Psalmist quoted by Jesus—"The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes." It is the same

rejection and alienation which our first parents manifested when, after their selfish and fatal acts they tried to hide themselves in the bushes of the garden. While love to God and His Son leads inevitably to the keeping of God's commandments, alienation from God as surely leads to sin or lawlessness (John xiv 15). In order to our keeping God's law, we must "continue in His love" (John xv 9). And this love to God shows itself in love to all His, so that Jesus teaches us even "to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us" (Matt v 44). The coming short in this high standard of duty is sin according to the teaching of Jesus, "Woe unto you, Pharisees," said he, "for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God" (Luke xi 42).

As connected with this matter, it may be proper to mention that Jesus taught of a personage who seemed to be sin incarnate—"the devil," "a murderer from the beginning who stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father thereof" (John viii 44). Elsewhere he is described as the "Enemy" (Matt xiii 28). He tempted Jesus in the wilderness, but was baffled. Jesus speaks of him also as Satan (Luke xxii 31), and tells us that Satan asked to have Peter "that he might sift him as wheat." His desire is to have all men in his possession and under his influence. Hence Jesus teaches all people to pray to God to "bring them not into temptation, but to deliver them from the Evil One" (Matt v. 13). Being resisted in God's name, he will flee from the sinner. But as he is generally courted, not resisted, he is also spoken of as the "prince of this world," who comes under Christ's judgment (John xvi 11), while, on the other hand, "he hath nothing" in Christ Himself on which to found his temptations to evil (John xv 30). Those that reject Christ bear Satan's image and possess his nature (John viii 44), and come under a similar judgment (John iii. 18).

And unless they get rid of their sins and sinful dispositions, they with him will be sent into "the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt xxv. 41) This doom God deprecates. It is not the will of the heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish (Matt xviii 14) Yet no violence will He do to our human nature. The heart's decision must be left free. And if the sinner is determined in his rejection of God's help, he must continue lost—unsaved.

Jesus teaches that every one who does not love the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his mind, and his neighbour as himself, sins against God. This love one has to give always. Whoever does not, incurs the condemnation (Matt xii 35-40) metaphorically referred to by Christ in the words—"The judge deliver thee to the officer and thou be cast into prison. Verily," Jesus adds, "I say unto thee—Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the last farthing" (Matt v 22-26). Jesus speaks in very awful language of the punishment of those who are wicked and who refuse to have him as their King and Saviour (Matt viii 12, xiii 42, 50, xxi 13, xxv 50-51, xxv 29, 30, Luke xiii 27, 28). His disciple James (ii 10) writes—"Whosoever shall keep the whole law (or thinks he does), and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." For he violates love—and love is all. And who can estimate what punishment such violation of the Creator's law by the creature entails, and justly entails? No one. As regards this world, there is great comfort in knowing that there is a time coming in which Jesus, spoken of by himself as the Tabernacle of God (just as men are called the Temple of his Spirit) will tabernacle with men and they shall be his people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more" (Rev. xxi, 3-4). Sin and suffering will pass away.

As stated above the children of wicked parents are likely to suffer from the wickedness of their parents ; and the children of good, pious parents are still more likely to profit from the goodness and piety of their parents. The stock or parentage of children govern their character as that of the lower animals does their character. The law of heredity is now universally acknowledged by scientific men. And it adds immensely to the seriousness and solemnity of all our actions, and more especially of those that go to form habits or dispositions of character in our children, not only the fact that for all our actions we ourselves will have to render account before the judgment seat of God, but also the fact that they go far to influence for good or evil the character of our descendants for, it may be, many generations. To this teaching Jesus gave the sanction of his name, not only in accepting the law of Moses as a moral guide, but also in express teaching of his own. Take, for example, that lengthy passage in Matt xxiii, 29—35, where he tells the Pharisees that by their evil conduct they witnessed to their descent from evil parentage, and he addresses them—"Fill up then the measure of your fathers that upon you may come (the guilt or punishment of) all the righteous bloodshed on the earth from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah." And very often it is that such a sin in its first stage is regarded as so insignificant that society takes no notice of it, but in its developed form it is severely punished in the son or grandson by the same society and sometimes it is condoned in the father, invisible in the son, and rampant in the grandson. The facts are of so comprehensive and patent a character that the theory has attained to a place and position among the recognised laws of nature. It explains what is spoken of as race characteristics, national peculiarities, and family distinctions, transmitted from generation to generation and age to age. This fact adds immensely to the responsibility of man in regard

to all his actions, alike as to his power to add to the characteristics, good or bad, of his descendants, and as to his power of arresting the descent already begun of bad or good habits created by his ancestors. He must not forget that he is blessed with a free will enabling him to add to or subtract from the cargo of blessings or curses sent down by himself and his predecessors to his descendants for generations to come.

Jesus recognises the fact that all men are sinners, and burdened with a stained corrupt nature, by his insisting on the impossibility of any one entering the kingdom until first regenerated or born again. He, however, shows very clearly that all are not involved in the same guilt. There are degrees of guilt and consequent degrees of punishment. "If I had not come and spoken unto them," said Jesus of certain Jews who rejected him, "they had not had sin," that is, then sin would have been comparatively insignificant. To the same effect are the words addressed with such burning earnestness to the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida, among whom so many of his mighty works were performed (Matt xi 20—24). He told them very plainly that in the day of judgment it would be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for them. So again in other circumstances, he said—"If ye were blind, ye would have no sin, but now ye say, 'We see,' your sin remaineth" (John ix 41). But while knowledge or ignorance causes an immense difference in guilt and punishment, it is only a difference as to degree. The same distinction is drawn by our Saviour on the Cross; "Father," prayed he, "forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii 34).

On those who resist the light a special evil is inflicted. They harden their hearts against the light and then hearts are hardened. We find the first mention of the law in connection with the revelation given by Moses to Pharaoh, when we read in the first place that Pharaoh hardened his heart, and then

as a consequence and as a punishment, that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex vii 13—22, viii 15—22, ix 12, x 20—27) This natural hardening of heart is spoken of as judicial blindness. In all this there is, as it were, a descending series of steps or stages of depravity spoken of as (1) carelessness and selfishness, (2) lukewarmness, (3) an uncomfortable conscious servitude to sin, and (4) obduracy or callousness of heart, manifesting itself sometimes in hardened hostility to the truth and sometimes in insensibility to the power and beauty of the truth and to the warnings of conscience. Of such Jesus said in the words of Isaiah —

"He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart,
Lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with
their heart,
And should turn, — and I should heal them"

Such is the natural result of a persistent, wilful, rejection of the use of God's blessings, alike physical, mental and spiritual. The very power to enjoy the blessing is taken away. "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath" (Matt xiii 12). This state of things is spoken of by Christ as sinning or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which *will not* be forgiven. The road to God is closed, but by man himself. The man has consciously brought himself to a bitter insatiable hatred of the truth, not that which frequently accompanies a man's first awakening to the servitude of sin and the beauty of holiness, but that of the man who had wilfully rejected the holiness and the truth which at one time he could not help admiring, and surrendered himself willingly to the allurements of sin, Satan, and utter selfishness. It is, however, only persons who have to a large extent risen high under the power of the truth that can fall down so very low as to be properly described by these terms—people who not only had eyes, but who saw to such an extent as to be made uncomfortable by the light, who could so persistently shut their eyes against it. It implies

the conscious resistance to, and suppression of, the work of the Spirit of God on the heart, resulting in utter hatred of the truth and of Him, or them through whom the truth was brought to bear on the heart. When a man has come to this stage, the Spirit ceases to work upon him, and his state is irremediable, all efforts to save him are "too late." He has placed himself outside the pale of redemption; and for him there is no hope in this life or in that which is to come.

Jesus represents his salvation as a salvation from sin, his name, given to him in his infancy, implied that idea. The salvation and the Saviour were announced to our first parents in Paradise, when they sinned. From that time to the day of Christ it was preached, so that God was never without a witness. Still the preaching of it was practically confined for many ages to the Jews, as Jesus said "Salvation is from the Jews" (John iv 22). And even Christ himself in sending out his first disciples told them—"Go not into any way of the Gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"—the reason being partly that the prejudice against his disciples as Jews was too strong among the unprepared Gentiles. Hence he said, "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matt x 14). Still, the salvation has been freely offered to *all* from the beginning down to the present day. Jesus refused no one, Jew or Gentile, and offered his salvation freely to every one. His words are—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "If, any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii 37-38). It is his salvation to which he refers under the figure "living water." His parting words to his disciples were—"Go ye and make

disciples of all the nations" The plan of salvation was one and the same, downwards through the ages, from the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise It was not a new religion Christ taught "Think not," said he, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away not one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished" (Matt v 18)

Still, the religion or the revelation of salvation through the Messiah had become dimmed or corrupted, so that large numbers even of the Jews were looking to an external punctilious observance of small matters connected with the law, as the way of salvation, such as washing their hands diligently before eating, careful washings of cups and pots and brazen vessels, rather than to purity and loyalty of heart before God Jesus faithfully addressed them and said, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, hypocrites, as it is written —

This people honoureth me with their lips,
But their heart is far from me
But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men

"Ye leave the commandment of God and hold fast the tradition of men," and so on (Mark vii 3—13)

The external rites did not hold a high place, if indeed any, in the salvation Christ came to give to men Neither did self-inflicted suffering or asceticism Jesus and his disciples practised no asceticism, and the Scribes and Pharisees of his day wondered, for they trusted much to their fastings, &c They therefore murmured against Jesus and his disciples and said unto him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often—but thine eat and drink?" Nay more, as Jesus himself informs us, because he refused to fast, and to teach his disciples to fast, these Pharisees went so far as to call him "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners"

(Luke vii 34) Long and frequently-repeated prayers, paraded before men, find no place in his salvation. Jesus tells his disciples not to use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do, thinking that they shall be heard for their much-speaking (Matt vi 7), nor to take pleasure in standing and praying in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they might be seen of men. Salvation was not to be got in any of these ways. More knowledge of religion and of the Scriptures or of theology, will not save. That was possessed by the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day more than by any other class of the community, yet there was no class which he denounced more vigorously. Mere learning, whether it concerned religion or philosophy, formed no part in his scheme of salvation. Though demanding good works, works of mercy and of benevolence,—salvation, as will be seen, was not to be obtained in that way either. Such works were to be the fruits of a restored union with God, rather than as means of restoration. The Prodigal, Jesus represents as coming in his rags without having first *done* anything to purchase a cordial reception for himself at his Father's house. While rich men are not rejected, they are not received because of their riches—"The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, scoffed" at Jesus and rejected his salvation (Luke xvi 14).

How then is salvation to be obtained? By approaching God in the spirit of the Publican, rather than in that of the Pharisee (Luke xviii 10-14). Approaching Him in all humility, with a sense of unworthiness weighing heavily on him, and crying "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!" rather than with an air of dignity and self-importance, and self-righteousness, congratulating God and himself on how good he has been as compared with other people. Pride and self-righteousness formed no part of Christ's way of salvation. It saved from these.

The salvation offered by Jesus flows from the eternal love of God the Father towards lost men.

(John iii 16) The whole world was lost And God so loved the world that He sent His son to save it That love was not procured by the redeeming work of Christ Christ was, on the other hand, the gift of that love He lived and died to save those "given to him" of the Father (John xvi 2, 6, 9, 24) To apply to them this salvation, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit from the Father (John xvi 26) Jesus speaks of this salvation as "life," "eternal life," "life everlasting" (John x 10, iii 16, Luke xiii 30)

This salvation includes a restoration to the *favour* of God, a restoration to his *image* and to his *presence* The first is illustrated in the forgiveness of sins given by God in Christ God, for Christ's sake forgives sins This forgiveness Christ frequently announced to those who believed in him, and he taught his disciples to pray to God for it It is illustrated also in the acceptance of our persons as righteous, that is, as if we had never sinned against him, as in the case of the Prodigal son, and the placing of us in his family in the enjoyment of the children's rights and blessings as the Prodigal was

Secondly, there is a restoration to the *image* of God This image or likeness, Paul tells us, includes knowledge (Col iii 10), and Christ informs us that those who do God's will, that is all saved ones, "shall know of the doctrine" as God's It includes also likeness in holiness and mode of life Just as unbelievers are described as like their father the evil one, and spoken of as goats placed on the left hand of the judge on the great day, so the believers are described as bearing a totally different character, manifested in a totally different life, and spoken of as sheep placed on his right hand They are born again, regenerated The change is permanent, in contrast with the transitory changes effected by human cures and remedies Every one that drinketh of the water of this world shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that Jesus shall give, shall never thirst, but it

shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life (John iv 13-14)

Thirdly, it implies restoration to the *presence* and *fellowship* of God, such as took place in the case of the Prodigal son. One of the promises Jesus made to his disciples was that he would be with them always, "even unto the end of the world," or, as it is otherwise translated, to "the consummation of the age" (Matt xxviii 20). And, again, he says—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt xviii 20)

Of all this, Jesus spoke under the name of "these good tidings" or "this Gospel" (Matt xxiv 14). His disciples spoke of it frequently under the name of "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." In a quotation which Christ makes from Isaiah, he describes his salvation as 'good tidings to the poor,' 'release to the captives,' 'recovering of sight to the blind,' 'liberty to them that are bruised,' and a proclamation 'of the acceptable year of the Lord' (Luke iv 18-19)

But the sum and substance of the salvation is Jesus himself. "The bread of God," said he, "is he who cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world," and he adds—"I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John v 33-35). Elsewhere he says, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John xi 25)

In connection with this salvation we are to remember that Jesus taught that, as a good shepherd, he laid down his life for his sheep (John x 23), that he came both to minister and to give his life *a ransom* for many (Matt xx 28). He came to redeem them. Of this life which he sacrificed for his people he said that, "No man took it from him, but he laid it down of himself" (John x 18). He was both sacrifice and sacrificer. Referring to his approaching death, He said—"For this cause came I unto this hour" (John xii 27), "As the Father hath life in himself, even so

gave he to the son to have life in himself." Thus it was that He was able to sacrifice *his own* life. In giving his life He gave what absolutely belonged to himself. But his giving it originated in the Father's love to men, and He was moved to give it because of his love to the Father (John xiv 31), and also out of love to man. What greater evidence of his love could He give than by offering himself a sacrifice for us and in our stead? His doing so was to him full of terror (Luke xxii 42). But he was willing that on him should come the punishment of man's sin even to the death, and He bore it all (Luke xviii, 31-33, xxii 22). Referring to this death he said "The cup which my father hath given me shall I not drink of it?" (John xviii 11). Jesus himself said—"Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die it beareth much fruit, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." But this he said, as his beloved disciple informs us, signifying by what manner of death he should die (John xii 24, 32, 33). The lawfulness of his so sacrificing himself is to be found in his being the Son of God, having as stated above, life in himself, able to lay it down and to take it up again. "No one taketh it away from me," said he, "but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again" (John x 18).

This salvation, thus earned for men by the Lord Jesus, is obtained by them by the simple exercise of faith in him. This act of man is by him called sometimes 'coming to him' (Matt xi 28, John vi. 37), 'grafted' into him, the vine (John xv 5), 'being crucified with him' (Luke ix 23), 'opening the door' of the heart to him (Rev iii 20), 'hearing' him, 'following' him, 'seeing' him (John v 25, Luke ix 35, John x 27, Matt 5-8). But more generally he speaks of it as 'believing,' 'believing Christ,' 'believing in Him,' or 'on Him' (John x 26, 38, xiv 1, x 42). What is meant is essentially an act of trust for our salvation in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. His

question to every soul is practically what he put so often to those who appealed to him for the cure of their bodies "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" And it is an act which every one of these performed when they came to him, trusting implicitly in his power and willingness to do what they needed. It implies on their part a sense of need. Hence his sayings that he came only to those needing the physician, those who realised that they were lost, that they were sinners needing salvation, not righteous people as the Pharisees were disposed to regard themselves. It is illustrated in the good soil receiving the good seed, in the conduct of the servants who, in the exercise of faith, used the two and the five talents respectively and traded with them, in contrast with the servant who received the one talent and hid it in the earth, judging his master to be a hard man reaping where he had not sown and gathering where he had not scattered (Matt xxv 24-25). Faith implies the very opposite of this last. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Christ taught, over and over, that all *must* believe in him (Mark xvi-15).

Christ taught also that faith and repentance were alike necessary to salvation. His words are—"Except ye repent ye shall all perish," "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Luke xiii 3, John iii 36). Elsewhere he says "There shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv 7, 10, 21, 22). Real faith in God naturally implies repentance towards God. There is, however, a faith in God of a superficial character, illustrated by the thorny, rocky, and way-side soils (Luke viii 13), which cannot produce good fruit and must not be confounded with the above—a mere intellectual conviction of the truth, such as even devils and worldlings may possess. The true faith is founded on knowledge and implies a loving child-like trustfulness

in God as alike powerful, good, and true. Then naturally, is formed that state and character described in the words of Jesus—"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father and I will love him and manifest myself unto him" (John xiv 21), and that described by him in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt vi 31-34)

WHAT JESUS SAID OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JESUS spoke much and often of the "Kingdom of God." What did he mean by the phrase? He uses it as a synonym for "the Kingdom of Heaven." But what does "the Kingdom of Heaven" mean? The phrase undoubtedly points to the spiritual character of the Kingdom, but more of this anon. Jesus commenced His public ministry in Galilee "preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and saying 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the Gospel'" The words presuppose a knowledge of the Kingdom in the hearers, and a longing for it. It was, indeed, nothing else than a realization of the glorious hopes cherished and foretold by Israel's prophets during the centuries and millenniums that had gone before. But what were these hopes? Undoubtedly, as understood by many Jews of the day, they consisted largely in the deliverance of Israel from Roman bondage, purity and freedom of worship, and general prosperity—as expressed by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, a contemporary of Jesus—"that we (Jews) being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days" (Luke i 74-75). Yet we must not forget that there are many passages in the old prophets which give pictures of the coming Kingdom not so very flattering to Jewish vanity. Take for example, the last of the old prophets, Malachi, who spoke of the temple doors being shut and no more fires kindled on Jewish altars, even while declaring from the mouth of God—"From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the

same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering, for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i 10) This represents the temple of Jerusalem shut up, and God worshipped in truth everywhere and by all people

The Kingdom of God, as prophesied by Malachi, was a Universal Kingdom, and its King a Universal Monarch—a 'Chakravarti' as Hindus and Buddhists call such. This was undoubtedly the view Jesus took of the Kingdom of which he spoke, whether we consider the Sermon on the Mount with which Matthew begins his public life, or the quotation from Isaiah recorded, as read by him publicly, in the first chapter of Luke's biography, where it is said that Jesus opened the book, and found the place where it was written—

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

"And He closed the book," His biographer adds, "and gave it back to the attendant and sat down and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened upon Him. And He began to say unto them —'To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears' And all bore Him witness and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke iv 17-21) Hence the Kingdom is frequently spoken of as the "*Kingdom of Grace*"

It is quite clear that Christ's idea of the Kingdom was not that of the multitude whose first thought was deliverance from the Roman power, still His utterances about the Kingdom were described by Himself and received by His disciples as *good news*, joyful tidings which gladdened the hearers. He compared Himself and His disciples, in contrast with John the Bap-

tist and his followers, to a bridal party rejoicing while the bridegroom was with them. John spoke of the winnowing fan separating the chaff from the wheat, of the axe laid to the root of the tree, and of impending doom. He was a man of gloom, if not of despair even of the repentance, self-reformation, fasting and praying which he himself preached. Jesus was, on the other hand, glad and hopeful, and so were His disciples. All this indicated differences of conception as to the coming Kingdom. Jesus meant a Kingdom of joy and gladness. "There is joy in the Kingdom of Heaven" over every repentant sinner admitted into it, as Jesus so emphatically asserts. The Jews meant glory, triumph, and political deliverance.

It was seen above that the entrants to the Kingdom were those who repented and believed. They are otherwise described as the poor, as sinners distinguished from the Pharisaically righteous, and as the lost (Matt xv 5, ix 13, Luke xix 10). In fact there was nothing required of them as antecedents that could be regarded as recommendations or claims upon the Kingdom. The Kingdom was open to all, for all are sinners, poor and lost. And as a matter of fact, it is those who mostly realize their poor, lost, sinful condition, that press into the Kingdom. Hence Jesus said in reference to such—"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matt xi 12). The hated tax-collector, the despised harlot, as well as the open sinner—the moral refuse of society,—have been pressing into the Kingdom from the days of John the Baptist till now, and the rich, the righteous, and the learned,—proud and self-satisfied because of their wealth, their imagined righteousness, and their worldly learning,—have been left outside, simply because they would not condescend to enter. To many of the other class, it has proved a very 'cave of Adullam, to which the distressed and the debt-distained escape when pursued by the demands of God's law and righteousness.

And observe, these poor, lost sinners are not confined to Israel or to any country, clime, or people. They are welcomed from all nationalities, races, and creeds. It is in fact the one really Universal Kingdom in this world of ours. Like ancient Rome, it opens its gates to all-comers, on the one condition—that after they enter they behave as good citizens. Once they were inside, Jesus could say to them “Ye are the salt of the earth,” “ye are the light of the world,” “the field (in which you are to work) is the world.” The whole human family constitute those who are to be salted or preserved, and lighted on the way through life. And yet, as Jesus said, His Kingdom was not of this world (John xviii 36). His Kingdom, that is to say, is a Spiritual Kingdom. While undoubtedly claiming (poor and despised as he looked) to be the King, he more than once refused to accept an earthly throne. His throne is the heart of man. Its spirituality is a fact which greatly disconcerted many of His friends, His own disciples not excepted. The spiritual character of the Kingdom is brought out with great emphasis in Jesus’ words to the Woman of Samaria—“The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit, and in truth, for such doth the Father seek to be His Worshippers. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,” it matters not where—Jerusalem and Samaria, the two sacred places of Palestine being rejected by Jesus as having no special claim to a monopoly of spiritual blessing (John iv 20-24).

And though it is quite true that he came primarily and in his individual capacity, as far as his public ministry on earth was concerned, in a special manner to the Jews, and lived and laboured almost exclusively among them, yet even then when occasion required that exception be made, he made it in favour of the Syro-Phœnician and Samaritan women and of the Roman centurion, and his parting words to his disciples were “Go ye and make disciples of all the

nations." But though Universal and Spiritual and "not of this world," yet it was to be entered and enjoyed now, here, in this world "The Kingdom of God," said Jesus in answer to a question, "cometh not with observation neither shall they say, Lo here! or there! for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii 20-21)

Though heavenly, spiritual, and divine in its nature and character, it is on the earth, here and now, and all who read this are invited to enter without delay and without money and without price. Its very name implies that it is social—a communion a fellowship, a society of which men and women become members. As far as it may be said to have any condition of admission where *really* there are none—it is a sense of poverty, of sinfulness, and of *lostness*, with faith or trust in it as a place or state of safety. All that is expressed in the first of Christ's words, which we quoted and which may be said to lay down the conditions, are repentance and faith. With these conditions before us, we may well exclaim with Jesus — "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven," and again with Jesus also say "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Are these blessings thine, reader? If not, delay not to secure them.

Jesus said "Seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things (the what to eat and drink and the wherewithal to be clothed) shall be added unto you" (Matt vi 33). 'His righteousness is the righteousness which *He*, the King, demands from his loyal subjects. It is the righteousness of the Kingdom. We have seen what the Kingdom is. Let us now see what Jesus' idea of its righteousness is. In these words it is made by him an essential part of the highest good.

And first let us notice that Jesus draws a very marked distinction between the righteousness of the Kingdom and some other righteousness known to his

hearers For said he—"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (the Pundits and Brahmins of his day), ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt v 20) The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, here slightly referred to, he explains in the words—"All their works they do to be seen of men They make broad their phylacteries (amulets and frontlets), and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi' (Matt xxiii 5-7) Their religion was external They put much trust in the repeating of *mantras* and the carrying of such in their phylacteries and about their persons They prayed often and long and in public, and set up claims to be specially holy or righteous because of all this Their righteousness however, was not the righteousness of the kingdom which Jesus preached To a certain sense these men, or at least some of them, were 'righteous,' 'good' sons, as contrasted with sinners, publicans, harlots and prodigals, and deserved a modicum of praise, which Jesus, when occasion required, gave to them He paints for us the picture of one of these, described by himself negatively as a man not extortionate, unjust, or impure, and positively as scrupulously attentive to all his religious observances, such as tithe-paying and fasting (Luke xviii 11-12) And yet he contrasts the shortcomings of their lives with the professions of their teaching "The Scribes and Pharisees," said he, "sit in Moses' seat, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe that observe and do, but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not" They paid "tithe of mint and anise and cummin," comparatively very unimportant matters, and "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith" Matt xxiii 2, 3, 23) In these latter is to be found the righteousness of the kingdom rather than in the former

Arising out of this difference there is another on which Jesus insists. The Scribes and Pharisees, says he, "bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders." In contrast with this he represented his own yoke as easy and his burden light. The distinction was founded on the fact that the Pharisees multiplied rules, drew endless nice distinctions and insisted on various points of casuistry, paying little or no attention to the spirit or motive principle actuating men. On the other hand, where love and trust are, there the services which would otherwise be irksome, become easy, even a pleasure. And not only is the service easier and more pleasant, but it is also more thorough and efficient. Hence Jesus could preach the Sermon on the Mount in all earnestness and with all its searching and comprehensive strictness, while the Pharisees could only look to such petty little things as tithes on mint, anise and cummin, to the multiplication of precepts and rules of conduct vexatiously minute, which forever tempted one to evade them in spite of the superstitious fears with which they were enforced. Hence the expenditure of much Jesuitical casuistry in attempting to justify such evasions. Thus they strained out gnats and swallowed camels, as Jesus put it. Scrupulous attention to these minutiae of conduct led inevitably to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law, such as judgment, mercy, and faith.

So also the external character of their righteousness led to the neglect of the inward state of the heart, its affections, dispositions, and aspirations, the emotions and motives of conduct. A man who was scrupulously attentive to these external rules of conduct might be and generally was, very far from God and from goodness of heart—so that he might be spoken of as a painted sepulchre full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness (Matt xxiii, 27), the dead men's bones being, nothing other than vanity, pride, heartlessness, mutual admiration, flattery, self-complacency, censoriousness, and loud ostentation, which naturally grew out of the

legalism, externalism, and Jesuitism, which this Pharisaic righteousness engendered. The virtues were artificial and unreal, the vices most real and aggressive—aggressive in the sense that they led to a contemptuous bearing towards the great bulk of mankind, who to these religionists were all unclean *mhlechas*, outcasts, Chandalis, and Pariahs. The righteousness of the kingdom was utterly opposed to this spirit, and Jesus spared not the inhuman contempt which the Brahmanic Pharisee felt to all outside his own little coterie. To this contemptuousness was frequently added covetousness, leading to the devouring of widow's houses as well as to the making of long prayers. In contrast with all this was Christ and his righteousness, "meek and lowly" which cast out no one, however outcasted he might be by others.

The righteousness, or rather religiousness, of the Pharisee was frequently a mere cloak, covering what was really unrighteousness, it was a garb hiding iniquity as well as insincerity of heart, hence the deep-dyed hypocrisy which Jesus lashed with just severity, as a mask, a pretence, a show, and a counterfeit, so that often the worse a man really was the more religious he appeared to be—a wolf in sheep's clothing. All this religiousness and so-called righteousness were, according to Christ's teaching, outside his kingdom. They formed no part of it, and had no interest in it. This is the burden of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount—a condemnation of mere externalism and an insistence on inward spirituality of thought in full accord with God's thought—a condemnation of mere lip service and a demand for heart service.

On one occasion we read that Jesus said to these Scribes and Pharisees: "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, hypocrites, as it is written—

This people honoureth me with their lips,
But their heart is far from me,
But in vain do they worship me,
'Teaching is their doctrine the precepts of men."

One positive characteristic of the righteousness of the kingdom is this nearness to God as distinguished from the far-offness of the subjects of the Pharisaic righteousness. The members of the kingdom draw near to God as their loving Father. He is not far from any one of them, and He is always seeking their good and rejoicing in their recovery. This relationship towards God is at the bottom of Christ's idea of righteousness. It is this that makes the yoke easy and the burden light. It is faith in this Father and in His Son that leads to a corresponding view of God's creatures generally, so far as they bear the loving image of the Father and the Son. It alters the whole character of the religion and of the life of those who come under its influence. Service becomes spontaneous towards such a God. It purifies the heart of all that is inconsistent with God's image, and creates and develops a likeness to God's character, correct thoughts of God lead necessarily to a correct way of living with God. Christ insists on purity of heart and life, founded on the idea of a pure and loving God. "Love your enemies," said Jesus, "and so shall ye be the children of your Father, who is in heaven." Thus He inductively, as He in the three parables of the 15th of Luke more directly, teaches that God loves even pagans, publicans, sinners, and harlots, and longs and labours to bring them near to himself. In this state of mind they would fulfil all righteousness and be perfect even as their Father in Heaven is perfect (Matt v, 48). Take with you the 'precepts of Jesus' as published by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and illustrated in the parable of *the good Samaritan*, with the characteristic meaning Jesus gave to the word 'neighbour,' as one who needs help and whom you can help, irrespective of race, creed, and nationality, and you have set before you a love, humane, catholic, and all-embracing, which cannot be overcome by evil, but which will, on the other hand, overcome all evil. This is the righteousness of the kingdom in its living, acting, form, and force. Nearness to, and communion with,

God, as our loving Father, necessarily leads to this, in proportion as it is real, close, and abiding. A correct view of God, as given by Jesus, leads naturally to a correct view of men and women in their relation to one another and in their relation to God—the fraternal and the filial—members of the one family and sons of God.

The righteousness of the kingdom consists largely in realizing aright these relationships. When this is attained to, then one will be willing to be nothing that his Saviour may be all in all. He will be ready indeed to sing—

Oh to be nothing, nothing ! Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel, for the Master's use made meet,
Emptied that He might fill me as forth to his service I go,
Broken—that so unhindered His life through me might flow

This righteousness leads one to say 'God's will be done'. Its chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever. Self is trampled under foot that God may be more and more glorified, even if necessary in the face of persecution from wife and child, or from father, mother, brother and sister. "Blessed," said Jesus, "are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v, 3, 10). Those who satisfied self and courted ease and comfort, will no doubt have their reward, but they shall not be among the citizens of the kingdom.

Another element in this righteousness arising directly from our knowledge and experience of the father, is a confident trust in His good will. Jesus insisted very strongly on this trait of character, and in proof of the reality of the paternal providence of God, He pointed to the fowls of the air and the flowers of the field, and asked—Are not men and women of greater value in the eye of God than these? And if God cared for these, surely He could be trusted to take care of those that trust in Him. He strongly deprecated all anxiety for the morrow, and pleaded for freedom from all care and for full, explicit, and unlimited trust in the heavenly Father. In all this

He set an example which we are called upon to follow. Then, we can confidently cry out—"If God be for us, who can be against us?" "All things work together for good to them that love God."

This trust implies fellowship directly with God the Father, Son, and Spirit. While the word, sacrament, meditation, and good works may be very profitably employed as means of grace, on the right use to which the blessing of God may be expected, none of them must be allowed to veil the Father's face, or deaden His voice, so as to interfere in any way with our seeing Him, as it were face to face, or with our directly and joyfully hearing His voice addressed to our own souls. Feeling so confident as to God's friendship, one has a holy boldness, an independence of spirit, in his intercourse with God and man. He has not the obsequiousness of the servant, but the joyful freedom of the friend and the son in the Father's house. He is not under priests who lord it over God's heritage, nor indeed a minor under the school-master. "Let not your heart be troubled," said He, "ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you." His disciples were to exercise their own judgment, and, convinced of the true and good, trust accordingly. It was only such that he wanted to be his disciples, but on these terms—that is the exercise of their true manhood—he wished *all* to be his disciples. And discipleship implies imitation, likeness, a conscious following of Him as the true and the good. The righteousness of the kingdom consisted largely in following Jesus, and that implies growing into His likeness—loving what he loves, hating what he hates, sympathising with his *sympathies*, and also sharing his *antipathies* against all pharisaism, legalism, ritualism, and sacerdotalism—and all this in lowliness of mind, and devotion to the Father. "Whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me," said Jesus, "he cannot be my disciple." He cannot otherwise enter the kingdom, nor be one of its citizens.

The righteousness of the kingdom consists also largely, according to Christ, in its citizens' devotion to it, as well as to Jesus its king. The two are indeed inseparable. It is the one pearl of great price, and the invaluable treasure found hid in the field (Matt xiii 44-46), to own which one is prepared to sacrifice all he possesses. In Luke's Gospel (ix, 60-62) Jesus peremptorily claims this highest and most heroic devotion to the kingdom in the words—"Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Jesus taught that one must count the cost before seeking admission into the kingdom, for its demands are exacting and high, and though these are felt light and easy and pleasant to the man who possesses the devotion demanded, to the man who has it not it must be burdensome, irksome, and galling in the extreme. Hence Jesus never lost an opportunity of warning such as had not this unfeigned devotion in words like those addressed to the Scribe—"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt xiii, 20). To another he said—"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast." In this we have a hint as to two kinds of perfection which characterised more or less the righteousness of the kingdom. There is the perfection here directly referred to the perfection of devotion or singleness of heart, the moving principle of our conduct, and there is, secondly, the perfection or absolute correctness of the conduct itself. Many may be quite perfect from the first of these points of view who are far from perfect when looked at from the other. The citizen of the kingdom is to strive after both. But it is the first of these that Jesus tested when he said—"If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me" (Matt xix, 21, Mark x 21, Luke xiii, 22). The young man was subjected to a

test as to the singleness of his heart, and alas! he was found to be double, divided between his wealth and his God. Such two-mindedness Jesus regarded as a fatal defect, as regarded the righteousness which he desiderated in the true citizen.

The same demand is made by Jesus in the parable of the labourer preparing his master's supper after returning from hard work in the field, (Luke xvii 7-10). The true citizens when they have done all things that are commanded of them will still say—"We are unprofitable servants, we have simply done that which it was our duty to do." Regarding no work however great or laborious as especially meritorious, devotion and humility here go hand in hand. Similar teaching is found in his parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt xxi, 1-16), where mercenariness is very severely condemned in answer to Peter's question "We have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?" The citizen's pleasure must be to submit to the King in all things, knowing that what he desires must be good, and that he himself deserves nothing. "Blessed," said he, "are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He feels that all belongs to the Master, and that it must be lawful in Him to do what He wills with His own. To think otherwise is evidence of an evil eye. This is the righteousness which Jesus asked from the citizens of the kingdom. Nothing less than this can satisfy him.

It is high, who can attain to it? "Thy righteousness," says the Psalmist, "is like the great mountains,"—Himalaya-like, whose snowy summits no foot of man has ever trod. Still the eye of man has seen them, the mind of man has reached their highest peaks, and men have climbed with great joy and rejoicing up their sides, some higher than others. What Jesus taught is that our eye and mind be on the summit and that our feet be climbing, true to what the eye sees. This is neither grievous nor unattainable. The ideal is high, and it is a joy evermore to

have a high ideal. It is the low moral ideal that is irksome and burdensome. As Professor Bruce, to whose work this paper is greatly indebted, remarks—"The divine ideal is exhibited, and is left to draw us towards itself by its own unearthly beauty. A perfect example is set before us, and its power to awaken enthusiasm is confidently relied on. The righteousness of the kingdom acts on us as the mountain peaks on the strong-limbed climber, or the model picture of a great master on the young artist. In either case a hard task is set, but the very arduousness is part of the charm." Scaling the highest heights is the healthy youth's highest pleasure. Even so is it the delight of the disciple to do the will of the Father and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Who would not rather ascend the high hills of God in the kingdom of Heaven, than walk the treadmill in the prison-house of Rabbinism or of Hinduism, Muhammadanism or Brahmoism?

What Jesus said of his own Death and Resurrection

Being human, Jesus possessed the normal attributes of humanity, but without sin, which he expressly disclaims, as when he says (John xiv 30)—"The prince of the world (i.e., the evil one) cometh, and he hath nothing in me," again (John viii 46) "which of you convicteth me of sin?" Of all the prophets, he alone is allowed by Muhammad to have been sinless.

Having human attributes he must have grown in mind and body. Hence it is recorded of him (Luke ii 40, 52) that as a child "he grew and waxed strong becoming full of wisdom," "and Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men." He grew in knowledge and wisdom. His was a perfect manhood. Hence it is that, while he never had anything to unlearn, we find him expressing himself more and more fully, as the years went by, on the subject of his death and resurrection, as well as on all other matters.

Being human he was mortal. He, of course, knew from the beginning that he was to die. Death and suffering were not hid from him as it is said they were from Buddha. But more, he early knew that he was to die, as we would say, prematurely and by violence. He spoke often of his death even in the beginning of his ministry, and, not long after, of the lessons his death was fitted to convey. As an example, take his words recorded by Mark (viii 31-33)—That Jesus began to teach his disciples that—

“The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the Scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

This violent death which he was to die, it will be observed, he connects with his rejection by the elders, chief priests, and Scribes, the spiritual leaders of his own people the Jews. The rejection referred to can only be of his claims as a commissioner from His Father in heaven—in other words, His Messiahship. Not only did Christ know and foretell that he was to die a violent death, but, as we see from the word *began*, he often foretold it to his disciples. To one of these occasions Matthew, the tax-collector, refers when he says (xvi 21)

“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

This death and these sufferings Jesus then connected with persecution because of righteousness.

We read that in continuation of the above he said to his disciples —

“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?”

He explained his death as one more illustration of what has been found true in the history of the

church and the world in all ages—the world's tendency ever to persecute the church and put to death her prophets and saints "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets' Wherefore ye witness to yourselves that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes some of them shall ye kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth" and so on From this disposition of the wicked to persecute the righteous, Jesus himself, it will be seen, was no exception, for he was to suffer even to the death And similar persecutions his faithful followers were to endure For this he prepares them by telling them what he was to suffer himself, and by such words as those in his Beatitudes (Matthew v 12) "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" This persecution Jesus and his disciples were to endure, and for this they had to be prepared When his Master first spoke of it, we read that Peter took Jesus and rebuked him for the remark On this Jesus told him that he "minded not the things of God but the things of men," undoubtedly implying that the divine and the human might come or appear to come into collision, and that in such cases the human must be subordinated to the divine, that to secure our highest life we must be ready to sacrifice our lower lives when called upon, as we any time may be, in the interests of righteousness All this Peter had not then realized

While this view of the death of Christ is true, and as such is a heartening view to all sufferers for righteousness' sake, and to all true followers of Jesus, it is not the whole truth, and it does not explain the teaching concerning the resurrection. That the death of Jesus signified much more than that he was a righteous man, persecuted for righteousness' sake, comes out prominently in other passages of his teaching. The symbolism under which he referred to his death makes it quite clear that to his death he gave much greater significance than is implied in the persecution for righteousness' sake, which explained the violent death to which so many of the prophets were subjected, and to which so many of his faithful followers were to be subjected. He speaks of himself in immediate connection with his death as the departure of the bride-groom, in the same connection he speaks of his flesh being eaten, or of himself, as bread or manna, being partaken of, as the temple being destroyed and renewed, as the brazen serpent in the wilderness lifted up to give life to the dying, or as himself lifted up and drawing all men to him, and as Jonah for three days in the whale's body. The circumstances in which he so speaks of himself make it quite clear that he regarded his death as most significant. The importance he attached to it is also seen from his later references to it being made simply by the use of the word "the hour." In as many as seven different passages he refers to his death in this way (Mathew xxvi 45, Mark xiv 35, Luke xii 53, John vii 30, viii 20, xii 23, xiii 1, xvii 1). Addressing his hostile countrymen he spoke of it as "your hour and power of darkness," to his own disciples—"The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified," and to God his Father—"Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son"—two very different but not incongruous views of one and the same event.

But let us return to these other passages and consider them one by one, and first the words he uses concerning the bridegroom (Matt ix 14-15). The disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus complain-

ing that while they and the Pharisees fasted oft, his disciples did not. Jesus answered them by the question—

“Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they will fast”

This is regarded as the very first occasion, chronologically considered, on which Christ unmistakably alluded to his death. The teaching of the passage as bearing upon the nature or character of his death is obscure. Possibly, the words were not intended to teach much more than the fact that he was to die by violence, and that then his disciples would mourn.

The next reference is in John vi 51-56, where Jesus said—

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?”

Then Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

This teaching concerning his flesh, as life-giving, arises out of the demand which the people made upon him to give them a sign, or do a work which they might see, and seeing be led to believe in him. Then fathers had a sign in the form of the manna in the desert, what sign would he give them? To all this Jesus answered—

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down

from heaven, and giveth life unto the world " Then said they unto him, " Lord, evermore give us this bread " And Jesus said unto them, " I am the bread of life he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not "

These words imply that Jesus in some mysterious manner, would be, in or by his death, the life of men True, it is not explained how, but the fact is most emphatically stated While Jesus Himself was undoubtedly to be the life-giving portion of the people, that on which they were to live, of course, spiritually, this was to be by believing in him, and believing in one who was about to die that they might thus have whereon to live Like the manna in the desert in saving from death and in securing life, he was to be also like bread made of the wheat, broken, bruised, fired, before supplying its full nourishing powers to the partakers thereof

Another teaching given in somewhat similar circumstances, but founded on different symbolism will be found in John iii, 14, and viii 28 Jesus said—

" As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved "

Then said Jesus unto them " When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he "

The incident referred to by Jesus in the beginning of this passage is recorded in the book of Numbers xxi 8,9, how the children of Israel grievously sinned against God, and were punished by an infliction of venomous serpents Repenting of their sins they were told to look, in the exercise of faith in God, on a brazen serpent lifted up on a pole, and that they would be healed by God They were accordingly healed In the same way the Lord Jesus would be raised up on the cross for the salvation of men, and all looking in faith to him would be saved Not only was his death foretold, but also its supernatural efficacy in the salvation

of men The serpent lifted up on the pole among the dead and the dying was typical of Jesus lifted up on the cross among the nations and centuries, drawing all men to himself and healing them from all their spiritual diseases

On another occasion the Jews asked of Jesus a sign on the strength of which they would believe that he was God's messenger (John 11, 18-21) —

Jesus answered and said unto them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"

Then said the Jews, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

But he spake of the temple of his body

When, therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said

As the temple, the seat of God's presence for the benefit of His people, was to be destroyed, so death was to overtake Christ's humanity, the seat of his divinity But in three days death would be overcome and Christ would rise victorious over death and the grave By this resurrection of his, as the Apostle Paul puts it in his epistle to the Romans, "He was declared to be the Son of God" It was the sign and zeal of God's acceptance of Him as the Saviour

Conveying very much the same meaning is another rebuke which he administered to the Jews on a somewhat similar demand being made to him for a sign (Matt xvi 1-4) —

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven

He answered and said unto them—

"A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas." And he left them, and departed

As Jonah was for three days and three nights in the sea monster, so would Jesus be in the bowels of the earth Here again, we find Jesus representing his own death and subsequent resurrection as significant of "life through death, construction through dissolution, and the rise of the new through the fall of the old"

All these very various ways of representing his death shows clearly that Jesus regarded it as of vital importance in connection with the success of the Kingdom he came to establish, and the life and salvation he came to bestow

But he uses language still more significant of the rationale of his death as highly instructive and comforting to his followers. We have seen that first of all he represented his death as inflicted upon him by his enemies—as indeed an illustration of a general principle which is none other than the persecution of the righteous by the wicked. This view we are always entitled to take of it as so far true, but we must not be carried too far by it, as if that was the whole truth, and as if it implied an involuntary or forced death on the part of Jesus. He assures his disciples that it was all the other way. There was no compulsion brought to bear upon him. The death he died was voluntary. He came in order to die. He of his own accord gave up his life. In the great prayer which he offered up to his Father shortly before he was betrayed to his enemies, he used these words —

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

He gave his life for his people. His doing so was in accord with God's will. His doing so secured great and glorious ends—nothing less than life eternal to all who chose to make his death theirs. With evident reference to his own approaching death he said to his disciples—“I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me—‘And he was reckoned with transgressors’ for the things concerning me have an end.” The point of the Messianic prophecy from which the above is a quotation is that the sufferings, while seemingly from man, were in a higher sense God-inflicted. In them God's will was being carried out. Evil men having their own wicked ends in view were actually carrying out God's great plan of salva-

tion Let any one read the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah and he will see this—Jesus was “smitten of God and by God numbered among the transgressors” Yet all the same, he gave his own life for his people No one took it from him That is the first step in the rationale of the stupendous act. The second, and if possible, still more important step in it, he explains in (Matt xv 28)—

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”

The words are repeated word for word in Mark x 45. These words could not fail to be highly significant to the Jews, expressing not only that the speaker meant that he was to lay down his life for the good of many, but that his life was to be the ‘ransom’ for them. Some of their own most expressive sacred words and institutions referred to ‘ransoms’ paid for men Take, for example, the institution referred to in Exodus xxx 12, when every Israelite contributed at every census half a shekel as ‘a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that there be no plague among them’ This was demanded from Jesus only three months before at Capernaum, when he was too poor to pay it Then we have the words of God to “the soul drawing near unto the pit and his life to the destroyers”—

“Deliver him from going down to the pit
I have found a ransom” (Job xxxiii 24),

or, take the words of the Psalmist—

“None of them can by any means redeem his brother,
Nor give to God a ransom for him
(For the redemption of their soul is costly
And must be let alone for ever)
That he should still live alive
That he should not see corruption” (Ps xlii 7-9)

When prisoners were taken in war, ransom was given for them before they could obtain their liberty Sometimes this ransom was given, as we have seen, in the form of money Sometimes it was given in the form of an interchange of prisoners, sometimes other lives were given, a number given as a ransom for one who

might be regarded as of great value. Hence the figure of speech underlying the question, of Jesus (Matt xvi, 26)—‘What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’

There is a ransom, the Jews were taught to believe, due to God for every soul. The half shekel was symbolical of that ransom—but merely symbolical. The half-shekel, one man might pay for his brother or for another man, but the real ransom, more valuable than the whole material world, no man could pay. This ransom, Jesus tells them, he paid. His life, sacrificed on the cross of Calvary, was the ransom paid for men, in order that they might have life evermore. In the words of Peter, the most forward if not the oldest of the disciples of Jesus, we find his understanding of the words we have been considering—

“Ye were redeemed,” says the Apostle to his Jewish brethren, “not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sakes, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Peter i 18-22)—

To rescue them from the thralldom of sin and Satan, on the one hand, and on the other to redeem from the demands upon them, because of their violation of God’s law and justice a most precious ransom had to be paid—a ransom whose value was beyond gold and silver, indeed, more than the whole world and all it contains. Significant of the infinite value of the death of Christ to Christians in all ages is Christ’s appointment of the commemorative rite, known as the Lord’s Supper, to be solemnized throughout all time among all communities of Christians. Matthew describes the institution of the Supper in these words (xxvi 26) —

As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat, this is my body”

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”

The other biographers describe this singularly solemn incident in the life of the Redeemer in words of like import. The broken bread and the poured-out wine were for all time to be significant of the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus. This, it will be observed, was to be also significant of the remission or forgiveness of sins. And it was to be this, just because it was to be regarded as the ransom paid for the sinner. Hence Paul puts it thus—"That if Jesus died for us, then we died, and if he rose victorious over death, then we have also risen in him." So close is the connection. "I am crucified with Christ," said he, "nevertheless, I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal ii 20). This is bold language on the part of Paul, but it is not bolder than the words of Jesus himself justify.

The use of the word "covenant" or "testament" by Jesus in this connection gives to his death a sacrificial character. Being a 'covenant' in his blood, it is necessarily founded on the sacrifice of him whose blood is shed. He virtually said—"This cup denotes not only my death, my blood, but my blood as that of a covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins." He had before his mind the Paschal Lamb slain annually at the feast of the Passover commemorative of the deliverance of the children of Israel by the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door-posts (Exod xii 3-14). So the bread, known as the shew-bread, was commemorative of the ratification of the covenant at Sinai—"an offering made by fire unto the Lord—every Sabbath set in order by an everlasting covenant." He had also very likely in his mind the new covenant of grace written on the heart referred to by the prophet Jeremiah (xxxi 31-34). In the words used by Jesus at the institution of the Supper and quoted above, he represents himself "as the Paschal Lamb whose blood shields from the destroying angel, as a peace-offering whose blood sprinkled on the members

of the holy commonwealth consecrates them to the Lord, as a sin offering on the ground of which God bestows on men the forgiveness of their sins" Christ's sacrifice, it must never be forgotten, is *himself*, not his blood merely, which was significant of the life or soul. This sacrifice of himself is a power and influence in the hearts of all who accept it as offered for them.

The influence of it and its commemorative importance of the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for loved ones are seen in the words of Jesus concerning the woman who broke the alabaster vase and poured its precious Indian contents on His head. With emphatic language he drew his disciples' attention to the woman's act, condemned by cavillers about her, and spoke—

"Verily I say unto you, wheresoever the Gospel (*i. e.*, the good news of his redeeming grace) shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her," (Matt xxvi 13, Mark xiv 9)—

As much as to say, in her act you have a perpetual illustration of my Gospel. Wherever the one is preached, the other shall be used to illustrate it, or as a companion picture to it. Her sacrifice of the vase and its precious contents for him had a moral affinity to his sacrifice of himself for the world. Out of what may be regarded as the infinitesimal loss comes the infinite gain. The eye must rest on the loss only, in order to be guided, and directed to the infinitely greater gain. Everywhere Christ represents the resurrection as following close upon the death. The death without the resurrection would be valueless and meaningless. The precious Christ is not the dead or the crucified but the Risen One. Hence the stupendous emphasis of Christ's words "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE," John xi, 25.

THE BIBLE'S RELATION TO HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY.



VISITORS at the White Mountains are taken to see that great natural curiosity which is known as the "Old Man of the Mountain," or "The Profile." On the front of a lofty cliff, hundreds of feet above him, the traveller is shown a great stone face with its gigantic features sharply cut against the morning or the evening sky. But the perfection of the resemblance is discerned only when the spectator takes his stand on a specified spot. Seen half a mile in either direction nothing is visible on the mountain side save a rugged mass of uninteresting rock. Everything depends upon the right approach and the correct position of the man himself as he comes to the study of this great natural wonder. What if it be the same with other things, with wonders in the *moral* as well as in the physical world? What if it be a very especial need when a young man comes to his Bible, that he should approach it in a peculiar way and occupy a certain definite position.

We have seen that the book which we call the Bible is a peculiar book, that its claims are unlike any other volume in existence, that it is a great moral wonder. Is it then out of analogy that it should demand a peculiar mood of mind, a certain suitable state of intellect and heart, in those who approach it? The poetic mood is needed for the poem. The philosophic mood is needed for the study of the volume on philosophy. The scientist claims that a peculiarly calm and patient mood is needed by him who would come aright to the great problems of science, that, not the poetic spirit, nor the philosophic spirit, nor yet the theologic spirit.

can be any substitute for this mood. And he is right. By all means, the scientific spirit for the scientific problem. So, too, the philosopher, devoted to the broadest inquiries, insists that there can be no substitute for the philosophic spirit, if one would study the volumes of Leibnitz or Descartes, of Hamilton or Hiccock. And he is right. Are we then out of analogy when we insist that here, in the study of the great moral problems of the Bible, there is needed a definite mood, a certain reverent and devout tone of mind; and that neither the scientific nor the philosophic spirit can be substituted for this obvious and necessary requirement? Everything depends upon the position of the beholder in looking up to this great moral wonder of a Divine Revelation. For the Bible is not made for the scientist as such, nor for the philosopher or poet as such, but for them all as men with moral wants, and for all other men, young and old as *moral beings*. For it is not our scientific or philosophical capacities, but our moral capacities that are to be awake and receptive as we come to the Book, one grand object of which is moral teaching.

And yet, I can understand how it is that exceedingly shrewd men, overlooking this very necessary condition, should make such sad work when they come to the more wonderful facts of the Scriptures. They are puzzled, confounded, and led on to infidelity by their wrong ways of approaching these things. They would come to "the feeding of the five thousand," or to any other miracle of the Bible just as they would come to any alleged fact on the purely natural plane of common things. But that miracle does not profess to be a common fact, nor to have been wrought down in the plane of nature. It refuses to be questioned by the agriculturist, by the chemist, or by any man either of vulgar or of learned curiosity. It was not wrought for wonder-seekers. It declines to let the philosopher talk to it of "laws of nature," and of fixed principles. It is its own principle. It is a physical fact with a moral meaning, and coming in under moral laws, in a system higher than nature. It is a moral doctrine in-

carnate in a physical fact. No man has any right to consider it out of *moral connections*. It is to be studied only in its relations to the Christ who performed it, to the time when it occurred, to the place it filled, to the truth it taught, to its bearing on the development of the Messiah's plan and aim, and above all to the niche it was to fill in the great temple which God through Christ was building for the reverent worship of reverent men. To put these moral connections aside and out of sight in judging of "the feeding of the five thousand," is to ignore all the reasons that made the miracle a possibility and all the conditions furnished by its Author to us for our investigation of the meaning, the character and the reality of the event itself. There are men who come as scientists with a profound reverence for "nature," and little for God, ready to refer anything to *it*, but receiving the suggestion to refer anything to *Him* with a shrug of impatient and irreverent unbelief. And these men, in this mood, would apply their methods to the miracles of the Bible! Nothing can be more absurd, unless it be the proposition of those who with a confusion of terms, which would be amusing if the theme were not so serious, propose to ascertain "the scientific value of prayer", as if anybody ever thought it had a scientific value, as if any Christian thinker had ever dreamed of measuring moral values by physical standards, as if one could ask of his grocer a bushel of right or a peck of wrong, of his tailor a yard of truth, or of error, or leave with his apothecary an order for the chemical analysis of a man's love for his child and the likelihood of a father to grant his child's petition! Christianity requires tests. Men are "to prove all things." But it suggests there is a proper way to do it. It says, put your crucible and scalpel where they belong in nature. Study your laws, whether of the physical world or of the mental world, in the obvious and appropriate ways that are open to you. And when you come to the religious facts, come also in appropriate ways, and seek moral truth by moral methods. We object to the claim of any set of men,

that we are to take then methods, excellent elsewhere in the study of the miracles. For the miracles are not mere phenomena, mere freaks of power for vulgar curiosity or for scientific and philosophic inquiry. They are parts of a mighty moral system. And they are not to be approached except from this point of advance. They are to be studied with reference to moral ends, and this neither the scientist nor the philosopher, as such, proposes to do. The miracles are for man as a moral being.

And the same is true of many an incident of the Old and New Testament which is not miraculous, but which nevertheless is very strange, and it may be almost absurd when seen alone. But when studied in its place and seen as an object-lesson of God for the moral teaching of men, it becomes not only credible but instructive, not only probable but morally certain, as an event needed for its moral impression at the very point of time, at the very place, and in the very circumstances described. So that if there had not been some such event occurring in the process of the divine tuition of the race, we should have wondered more than we wonder now, the absence of such events being more remarkable than their presence in human history. Considered simply as a method of healing human bodies how absurd the "raising of the serpent in the wilderness." But seen in the setting of the story, seen as God meant it to be seen, as a teaching and a prophecy of Christ's uplifting on the cross, seen as a renewing of the primal promise given after the primal sin, as the palpable objective demonstration of the great moral fact of an atoner and an atonement, seen as a lesson set to the whole world as to the place and the value of faith, the incident is not only redeemed from littleness, but it shines in such grandeur that its light is thrown across all the separating centuries. The entire language of the religious world has been colored thereby, and men everywhere have been led to associate the idea of the lifting up of Christ with the

lifting up of the brazen serpent Nay, the Great Teacher himself has interpreted for us the prophecy, has explained the object-lesson of God He has said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life"

I would have every young man who approaches the Bible come to it with the true idea of *God's method of revelation* in his mind For this is the key to the volume That method is easily gathered from even a general perusal. God's method is to *reveal himself to mankind through a particular race, the Hebrews, and this revelation, he will have to culminate in a particular person, Jesus Christ*

The Hebrew race was fitted to become the medium of this revelation by certain peculiarities

One of these peculiarities was then *capacity for moral ideas* True of all Oriental as compared with the Occidental nations, this capacity to receive and express such truths was pre-eminently a Hebrew trait They were quick beyond any nation of the olden time, in what may be called religious receptivity They were spiritual symbolists They thought in figures and talked in metaphors They went down naturally to the spiritual base of things It was not poetry, but religious instinct and the moral insight which made them see in all things the broad shadow of God's thoughts They saw Him everywhere And He was uttering to them spiritual truths where others saw nothing but bald bare physical facts. To the Hebrew mind material things were shadowy and fleeting, their main use being to remind man of the spiritual world so near, so potent, so helpful This physical world was the world of the dying, the other world, overshadowing this, was the world of the living The real world was the world of God and angels and souls, of love and of hate, of duty and of destiny, of heaven and of hell Outward things were just the images seen in a mirror—not the realities, but only representa-

tions of the realities And so every thing in Palestine was a shadow, a type, a semblance, a prophecy of some moral fact, a representation of some deep religious idea Each object was bursting with moral meanings, and the whole world was alive with God's thoughts revealed unto man through temporal objects

This religious idealism shows itself in all the Old Testament stories The Biblical history is unlike every other on this very account Says Stanley "Every incident and every word of a narrative is fraught with a double meaning, and earthly and spiritual things are put over against each other—hardly to be seen in the English version, but in the original clearly intended" Take the promise on the strength of which the Hebrews went out of Egypt and became a nation It reads, literally rendered, that they should come to "a land of rest" To *us* there would be just this meaning, that after being vexed in slavery, they should come to a land where there was no task-master But that was the very least of all the things which it meant to them The physical was the mere alphabet for the spiritual idea So to a child the mere letters of the word "men," take the attention He says to himself that the first letter has three lines with curves and so it is "m", that the letter curved at the top is "e", and the last with two lines and curves in it is "n", and that all together they spell the *word* men" But a full grown man, seeing that word on the page, does not stop upon the letters as letters, still less upon the word as a word There is a *thought* in it for him He grasps at once the idea of a broad race of mankind with unity in their diversity, with their social, their political, their moral relations

The ancient Hebrew went through no lengthened process of logical deduction No idea had he of reasoning by analogy He did the thing instinctively He did not set up the outward object and extract laboriously the metaphor, and then mechanically apply it to moral truths To him the two were one If either

led it was the spiritual.* And when Moses gave the promise of "a land of rest," every Hebrew mind went backward to "God's rest," at the close of creation, and took up the idea of "Sabbath rest," that is of heaven itself, the serene abode of God. Not backward only but forward the word carried every one of them. "Rest" was not to them simply a state of bodily repose. The word was broad enough to denote God's smile, favor, blessing, in every form of political and spiritual enjoyment. It meant to them the best of earth and the best of heaven. They seized on the moral idea of the physical fact. And this was their great characteristic as a race, and the leading element of that national feeling which fitted them to be a peculiar people.

And here is the answer to the question pressed so often upon the young man who keeps his faith in the Bible, as to why such prominence is given to the Hebrew history. God selected the best instrument for his purpose—The plan of revealing himself through men once chosen. This was the race foremost in moral capacity, the nation who not only, by inheriting the traditions of the best ancestry, but by their natural constitution of mind, were best fitted to do his work in this thing.

And there was also to be a distinct moral lesson in the *development* of the Hebrew nation. Born in the wilderness, the nation had a unique training for their mission. Nothing like it before or since in human history. The escaped tribes go out of Egypt under circumstances without a parallel, and for a journey that was as singular as was their mission peculiar. Why

* In this fact may be found the removal of a difficulty which some have felt as to "Solomon's Song." It has seemed to them too *sensuous*, as it sets forth the ecstasy of religious feeling under the allegory of a bride and a bridegroom. It may be too warm for our cooler occidental tastes. But the Bible is for the Eastern as well as the Western nations. A distinguished English orientalist has declared that, whereas once the book of "Solomon's Song," was to him a great trial on the ground above named, his residence in the East, and his notice of the fact that the religious ideas of the people found constant expression through nuptial figures, had removed from his mind all his former feeling.

that long journey of forty weary years? Some will hasten to say that it was for the sins of the people. But then the sins usually named as the reason for this journey were not committed until after the journey had begun, and there were indications at the outset that the journey was to be long, tedious and difficult. The course taken at the very commencement led them away from Palestine. The Land of Promise was but a little distance, had they gone in the direct way. There were fewer obstacles. They would have met no foes. Most of the brief journey would have been through a region of country desolate enough now, but then watered by "the river of Egypt," and connected by a grand system of canals with the Mediterranean. Had they taken this the natural and direct course, forty days, instead of forty years, would have sufficed for the journey. But they go away south-east towards the desert, rather than up north-east towards the fruitful plains of Southern Palestine.

There is a reason for this thing. May it not be found in the *teaching* God would give that people? He would leave such a stamp upon that race by His communications to them in this wilderness, that all through human history they should be "a peculiar people." Such laws He would impose upon them that no contact with any other race should ever entirely obliterate the impression. Left in Egypt, this teaching could not have been given. No more could it, had they gone at once into Palestine. They must be separated from heathen nations for a time. They must be under direct tuition. On the one hand, they must be purged from the defilement of Egyptian ideas, on the other, special revelations must be given, and special discipline be received. The wilderness was then university, and God was their teacher. They were to cease to be tribes and become a nation. It was their period of childhood,—the period when what is learned abides, when a single year tells on a lifetime.

The most magnificent ritual the world ever saw was introduced, every rite of which was eloquent with the

truths of the coming Gospel. New ideas as to God, His holiness, His justice and His mercy, were put before this people. Every minutest thing, even down to the fringe on a priest's garment was significant, while the grand feasts and festivals, the appointed sacrifices, the more marked celebrations of the nation were intended to make them acquainted with ideas to which all other Oriental nations were utter strangers. Not by laws alone, but by providences often miraculous, did God give them teaching. But the providences would have been of little worth for this end aside from the laws. Ordinary and extraordinary observances, days of atonement and of passover and years of Jubilee, all were to make them familiar with the root-ideas of the Gospel time. It was designed to indoctrinate a people in religion as never before. They were to be directly trained of God with no contamination from any surrounding nation. Taught of heaven, apart from all that could hinder the force of that teaching, and under the most favourable circumstances for that end that can be imagined, they spent those years in the wilderness.

And this teaching was not alone for the Hebrew nation. It was the human race that was in the eye of God. The tuition of the wilderness was to be written out. It was to be a story for the world's study. And so it has been. For Muhammadan and Jew and Christian alike have pondered it. Thousands who know nothing of general history, know of the wilderness wandering. Thousands who could not give a connected story of the battles of their own land, can tell of the battle-fields and camping stations of the Hebrew host on the way from Egypt to Canaan. And when any young man is pressed with the objection that "too much space is occupied in the Bible by the story of an old race which has now lost its importance in human history," let him be ready to reply that such an objection shows not only narrowness of view but an entire mistake as to God's plan of using that Hebrew race in their historical development as the medium of His revelation to mankind. Seen in its true relation, seen as an intentional

lesson-paper for the world, the old story of that peculiar nationality is not a Hebrew idyl, nor a scrap of antiquity to be preserved by those curious and careful about the olden time. It is for us as well as for them, a thing of to-day in meaning though of yesterday in fact. Its minuteness is not trivial, but intentionally careful. Its incidents are not accidents, but they are put into the record to be pondered, as they have actually been, by the most thoughtful and advanced souls of the race in their search after God's will.

Now, again, can we overlook the *geographical* position of this Hebrew race? The land of Canaan stood out fronting other lands. It was part of Asia, and yet was separated from it by a distinct geological formation that is without a parallel on the globe. In some convulsion of the crust of the earth, there has been formed a depression running north and south, so that the great Jordan valley lies a thousand feet, in some places, below the Mediterranean, thus cutting off Palestine from its own continent and thrusting it forth into the presence of the world. Along its eastern shore stretched the "great and wide sea," the Mediterranean, with its Joppa the oldest, and its Tyre the grandest sea-port of the ancient civilization. Waves that washed Europe on the one side and Africa on the other came dashing in upon the long sea-beaches of Palestine. It was central to the commerce of the world. It invited the ships of every clime to bring their treasures for exchange upon those fruitful shores. That grand old sea gives us the means of making accurate the division between ancient and modern history. For if modern history is the history of lands washed by the hoarse surges of the stormy Atlantic, then we may define ancient history as the history of the lands washed by the white surges of the blue and beautiful Mediterranean. But if Palestine stood fronting the sea and inviting its commerce, no less was the situation propitious on the landward view. If ships brought commerce over the sun-lit waves of the Mediterranean to her western coasts, the caravan, rich in treasures, on its way from Arabia and the lands of

the more distant Orient, must pass through her eastern gates, and over the Jordan valley and up and into Palestine, on its way to the wealthy cities of Smyrna and Ephesus, in Asia Minor.

So, too, on the south-west lay Egypt, the most fertile land on earth, and north and east lay Assyria and Babylonia, prodigal of gold and gems, boasting of mineral as Egypt of agricultural wealth. In the rivalries of trade or the fiercer rivalries of war, this land of Palestine was directly on the highway between the two. None could pass east of it, for there was the pathless desert. They must go directly through for trade. They must march their armies directly across the plains in time of war. In days of peace—and Solomon saw that “the empire was peace,”—the heaviest tolls might be exacted and were gladly paid. Hence the immense revenues of Solomon. Hence the riches that built the Jerusalem temple. In time of war—and this was nearly all the time—between the vast northern power and the vast southern kingdom, it was policy in the Jewish nation to take part with neither, but to furnish, at a regular commercial price, supplies to both. So that in a strict neutrality in a war, and in a careful trade with the contestants, the advantages to them were nearly as great as those of peace. The great cities were back upon the spine of hills which runs up and down the land. And the Egyptian armies seeking their Assyrian foe, or the Assyrian hosts seeking their hereditary enemy of Egypt, always attempted to pass at the foot of these hills and between them and the sea. There were two plains along the sea-shore, varying from one to twenty-five miles in width and thrice that length from north to south. Both of them led into a vast valley-plain of twenty by thirty miles running directly across the country from east to west, the great plain of Esdraelon, the battle-field of the world. On this field armies of every ancient and of nearly every modern nation have met in deadly conflict. It has been trod by Babylonian armies under Nebuchadnezzar, by Assyrian armies under Sennacherib, by Jewish

armies under Gideon and Saul, by Egyptian hosts under Necho, by Moslem hordes under Saladin, by crusaders from Spain and Portugal, from Germany and Italy, by English troops under Smith, and, less than a hundred years ago, by Frenchmen carrying the imperial eagles under the personal leadership of Napoleon I of France. The world's history has been written in blood on this plain of Esdraelon, in Palestine. Those great conquerors whose disastrous fame has filled up with sickening fullness the records of human history, have all seen that Palestine was geographically the pivot of empire, and that the Esdraelon plain was the great field the winning or the losing of which carried with it all they hoped or all they feared. To this plain they have come either in person or by their armies. Here came the Persian Cyrus, the man whose rise to power is the most wonderful exploit in history, that Nebuchednezzar who when he died left behind him "more buildings reared by his hands than any man who ever stood on this planet," that Macedonian conqueror who wept for other worlds to subdue, that Roman Cæsar who by his vast hordes overran Palestine, giving imperial names to her cities and to her beautiful inland sea, that Richard of England whose fame is world-wide, that Godfrey, at once the pride of Europe and the boast of his own France, that great emperor Frederick Barbarossa, whose ashes are buried in the ruins of the old Christian temple at Tyre, near by this plain where he fought so nobly,—these are some of the men who have seen in Palestine the very central spot of geographical position, the possession of which in their day was essential to their plans of empire.

And when any young man hears a sneer thrown at Palestine as if it were never of any importance, as if it had always been an out-of-the-way land, and had no right to such an eminence in the Bible, let him recall the fact that it has been coveted more than the gold of Ophir and the mines of Golconda by the great conquerors, statesmen, rulers of the world. And instead

of heeding the sneer, let him pity the man whose knowledge of the history of the human race leads him to undervalue the importance of the land which geographically was the most important land of any on earth to the older nations. Let him recall also the fact that when the older nations faded out and their lands were occupied by newer peoples, there was still the same ambition to possess Palestine. Assyria and Egypt broken and retired from the stage, there arose west of Palestine, two empires, one that of Greece, the other that of Rome. Both coveted the east, the far east. Between them and that far east stood Palestine. It was necessary to their project of universal empire to gain a foot-hold in Palestine and make it their base of operations. They came, a vast host, marching across Asia Minor, and whitening the Mediterranean with their vast fleets of transports. They effected a landing in Palestine. But when they attempted to advance inward, they were met by the hosts of the far east who swarmed in upon the plain of Esdraelon from over the Jordan and gave them battle. In a hundred fights the Greek and the Roman had a sort of success. They occupied, partially and for a very brief time, the country, holding it in military duress. But in the end both were routed, and retired discomfited from the land. They had dashed against this rock and their dreams of universal empire were rudely broken. And then, too, when other centuries had come and gone, and the Holy Land was the possession of the Moslem of the east, there went forth a cry through the west of lamentation, because the crescent instead of the cross held Jerusalem. The cry of lamentation became one angry warfare, and the crusades were organized. It was the whole west warring against the whole east. It was a continent rising against a continent for the possession of a strip of land not much larger than Assam or Ceylon, but which had been for long centuries not only the best known but also the most coveted land on earth. The last blow ever struck by the crusaders was vainly given on a

little eminence of the Esdraelon plain, a few hundred feet only from the spot where Jesus uttered the "Sermon on the Mount" And from that hour the victory of the east has been secured, and the Moslem has held Palestine in his merciless grasp And as with religious wars so with those prompted purely by ambition Napoleon in the fullness of his lust for power craved the mastery of the east He saw the worth of Palestine as the only possible base for further conquest And he must try his hand at the task only to find his dream of eastern empire melt away on these shores where others before him had met a similar fate.

And thus God's choice of Palestine as a home for his people, as a place second to none in all the old world in its geographical importance, has been endorsed by the world's statesmen and warriors It was no secluded spot It fronted the continents It took the eye of the world All done there was done for the gaze of the race And God's wisdom selected not only the people so keenly receptive of moral ideas, but the land for them to inhabit, that his purpose might be accomplished of giving to the race through them, as they dwelt in this central position, a revelation of his will

The *historic* position of the Hebrew race in their home at Palestine is worthy of study as showing another feature of God's plan There were centuries before them There have been centuries after them But had they appeared sooner or later in the calendar of historic time, they would have utterly failed in their mission Back of them were the two great historic peoples of Babylonia and Egypt, but both were waning when the Hebrews appeared After them the Romans were the world's masters Parallel with them was the Assyrian empire in the days of its strength A few centuries earlier the documents of Moses would have been impossible A few centuries later the necessary tuition of the Hebrews in the arts of Egypt could not have been had Then geographical position was not more striking as they fronted the continents than

was then historical position as they stood conspicuous in the world's thought. They took from the wisdom of Egypt all that was valuable, just as Plato took his philosophy from the old city of On near the banks of the Nile. But Plato and the Greeks developed what they took in one way, and Moses and the Hebrew hosts in another. From Egypt came ideas of agriculture and the arts of embroidery and of letters for writing the knowledge of the astronomy by which the Hebrews fixed their numerous festivals, and the history by which Egypt became the second as Palestine the first of the Sacred Lands. And they left behind them in Egypt a moral impression, which was, in part at least, a revival of the more ancient Egyptian faith in the eternity of God and the immortality of man. From Pharaoh's reluctant lips they forced a confession of partial faith in Jehovah as God. When settled in Palestine their distinct belief was known to all the nations, and obtained respectful recognition. Hiram, king of Tyre, a hundred miles from Jerusalem, sent workmen to Solomon to assist in building the Temple on Moriah. Cyrus gave a decree which shows that Hebrew ideas had penetrated the Persian mind, and that the enslaved race were masters in the realm of ideas of their captors. And so, in war and in peace, in victory and in captivity, now by voluntary and now again by involuntary teaching, the Hebrew ideas were slowly but surely working their way among the nations, and thus carrying forward the divine plan. And as God was ordering their historic position, so he was arranging the nations to receive the influence they were to exert. Parallel with them, during an important part of their history, was the Medo-Persian power under which flourished those sects nearest in religious belief to the Hebrews of any known to history. One of them, the world-famed "Magi," sent its deputation to Palestine at the birth of Christ. And when Jewish history culminated in the advent of Jesus, God had ready the one great empire of Rome, then the mistress of the world. Thus it was that the unity of peoples

in one sovereignty made them, willing or unwilling, God's messengers to spread speedily the story of the cross over the inhabited earth

And here, too, we find the reason for those peculiar incidents which appear in the Scriptures. These incidents are intended to be *object-lessons*. More words would be forgotten. But facts with a moral meaning in them would be remembered. We cannot imagine any better way, or, indeed, any other way, in which God could teach the primitive tribes and nations. A fact, a striking occurrence, a phenomenon singularly unlike any other, which these olden nations would at once connect with the finger of God, was surely the most impressive most natural form of moral teaching and the one most to be expected. If Hebrew history were without its examples of striking incidents used as divine object-lessons, we should have wondered at it. Their absence would try our faith more than their presence. To a people apt in receiving this kind of teaching, God gave these object-lessons, — and the fact that they were accepted so readily, confirms our faith in the wisdom that selected the method.

Take the story of the first man's first sin. The whole series of circumstances, seem to be contrived for their moral impression. No need so far as man's actual fall was concerned, of the events which took place in the garden, of the serpent's agency of the sword at the gate. But the occurrences were to be for the world's teaching. The garden not only does symbolize, but was intended, as we know by Christ's use of the word Paradise, to symbolize the state of happy holiness, the fulness of which is heaven. And sin was to be made loathsome and foul, and temptation to be seen as stealthy and mean, a crouching serpent with slimy tongue and insinuating motion and beautiful form, to charm and then destroy men. And the historic fact of Satan's temptation through words that seemed not his own but the serpent's words, is not only named by our Lord long centuries afterwards but the moral teaching of it is

enforced by him when he says, "Ye are of your father the Devil. He was a liar from the beginning." The whole series of facts was to be rehearsed in the earliest centuries by the patriarchs and thus handed down through the generations, until written language came to the rescue of an oral tradition, and Moses must put the story on the imperishable pages of Revelation.

And the flood is in the same line of object-teaching. It taught the world of the sin of attempting to do without God. And no less was the deliverance given to Noah a designed instance of palpable teaching. For it has so stamped our whole mode of thought that, in the religious language of the world, *the ark* is the symbol of salvation. So, too, we can understand the overthrow of Sodom only when we see it as God's teaching of retribution. In the pathway of the great caravans, on the world's broadest highway situated where its destruction would be as conspicuous as its wickedness had been notorious, sure to be the theme of remark as an example of divine wrath in its singular overthrow, in its doom first by fire, and next by burial in the sea the mists of which are a perpetual reminder of the "smoke of her torment," that old city, living in story though long dead in fact, has stood out on the sacred page as a solemn warning, the lurid light of which has caught the eye and alarmed the wickedness of all generations of men. And, in after ages the deserved destruction of the wicked Canaanites who were usurpers in Palestine, who had abundant opportunity to repent and to leave the land, but who made the approach of the Israelites a pretext for a war in direct defence of idolatry—this destruction, so often condemned, is to be seen in the same light. It is no isolated event to be judged by ordinary rules. The nations that then existed and that were to be born needed to understand that denying God and attempting to thwart his will were sure to bring ruin. And so all through the prophets, we hear those iron-tongued men ring out the threat that, as God destroyed the nations in Canaan, so he

would destroy the Jews, if they walked not in his ways *

But probably, the incident in the Bible which the young man will hear most earnestly denounced is that concerning the proposed sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Though the fact was not done, and was not intended to be done, yet there stands the command. The objector urges that such a command, though God intended at the last moment to stay the fatal knife, must have been an outrage on the moral sense of Abraham and of the whole world, that it seems a blot upon the moral character of God himself for him to order the death of a child at a father's hands. It is true that the popular answer vindicates God from blame. It is true that we are to look at the "whole transaction, the command and the counter-command, and that Abraham afterwards saw the scope and compass of it which cleared up every difficulty." But is it enough that we simply clear God and his servant Abraham from blame? This would leave the matter in its negative aspect. It would perhaps excuse, but would it justify the transaction? Nor does it tell us the deep reason for this command, so unusual, nor does it give us any hint as to why the story is so prominently recorded in God's word. There must have been some great reason, lying back of all this, for allowing such a transaction as the attempted offering of a son in human sacrifice by the hand of a father who was the most righteous of all the men in his day.

Now what if we have here *God's object-lesson in redemption*—the "preaching of the Gospel." What if the full justification of the transaction, not only

* As to the Psalms which contain prayers for the destruction of David's enemies, it must be remembered that he was not a private man wishing for private vengeance but a king, and as such the rightful head of authority and the executive whose duty it was to punish evil doers. And, above all, he was, before the surrounding nations, the representative of the Jehovah worship. Hence the enmity of idolatrous princes was directed not only against his throne, but against his God and his religion. See the fifty eighth Psalm, where we have in the eleventh verse an explanation of the malediction in the tenth verse.

to the Patriarch's moral sense, but that of the whole world, is to be found in that which it was intended to teach men of God's love in its method of saving them by the sacrifice of the only-begotten Son. Put it thus: There had come to Adam, in the garden, the primal promise, laid after the primal sin. It was no general declaration of a redemption, but the special promise of a Redeemer. This promised Redeemer was the one object of all the ancient faith. The belief in his coming was the one article in the creed of the "youthful world's grey fathers." Further on in history, the mass of the race had lost out the belief in the promise, and so were doing "only evil." God sent Noah, who, in the very form of deliverance granted to his household, preached the Gospel in a figure—the ark being not only a type of salvation, but of its method by special Divine interference for those who believe and obey. Years go by. The faith in the promise is again almost lost. There is needed once more—this time for all the centuries—a *great palpable object-lesson* that shall stand up and out and take the eye of the world. But who should give this lesson if not this man Abraham, "the father of the faithful?" He was to set the world a lesson of human faith in obeying a divine command. Why not also a lesson as to the Divine Fatherhood, as it was to show itself in making sacrifice for human redemption? Can any other way be imagined so awful, so tender, so impressive as that of a father giving up his only son? Now, what if God, the atoning idea ever present in his thought and ever craving expression, took this man Abraham as it were at his word? What if he appoints to him such a lofty proclamation of this fact as was allotted to no other "preacher of righteousness?" Abraham shall, in a sense, represent God. He shall show what God's love is like. He shall help to prepare the world for the Calvary scene. Through this father's devotion of his son to death and through his receiving of Isaac "from the idea, from whence he received him in a figure," there was set forth, as nearly as could be

done by any human transaction, the great fact of God's gift of the Divine Son to die and to rise from the grave for human redemption. And so this whole scene is to be judged not at all by our ordinary rules of moral judgment as to right and wrong. And if we fail to see how as a merely human transaction we can quite justify it, we are happily delivered from all difficulty when we see in it a divinely-ordained setting forth of the great redemptive fact. That it has been looked upon generally through the Christian centuries as our greatest illustration of that fact, is no small evidence that it was *intended* so to be regarded by God. And thus it was a prophetic scene, a great objective *representation* to those who lived before the Messiah's day. Only thus can we understand this transaction, or justify it, or admire it. The Messianic idea is the key to many an event in the Old Testament. And nowhere do we more need it, and nowhere when seen, is it more instructive than in this great object-lesson of redemption which is here furnished to the world.

And a young man's difficulties are removed, and his Christian faith is established by noticing what may be called the *timing* of the miracles and "wonderful works" of the Scriptures. This thing grows on one who studies the volume. The miracles are no longer a confused jumble of strange events. Each takes its place, its *own* place, and it is seen that it could not have come in any other time. No two of these miracles can change places. The flood does its work at its own epoch. Abraham's attempted sacrifice is the event for that hour, and for no other. No Old Testament miracle could have occurred in New Testament times. Those that appear somewhat alike are so only in appearance. The New Testament miracles are exactly ordered as to the point where they occurred. They are progressive. The "raising of Lazarus" could not change places with the "turning of the water into wine," except by an entire destruction not only of the Gospel story but also of the harmony of Christ's own character. He could not, being

the Christ he is, have inverted this order, if he would be understood by men. Embosomed in a family known only in the social circles of a Galilean province, it was exactly fit that his first miracles should be the *consecration of domestic life*. But the grand resurrection miracle was best done near Jerusalem just when all teaching and all miracle were culminating at the close of his ministry.

And this element of time is to be noticed in an event midway between the two just named—the transfiguration. It grew out of a want that did not exist either at the outset or at the close of Christ's earthly life. It was needed alike by the state of mind in which the immediate disciples found themselves, and of the scheme of his own life as shown by what preceded and followed the event. He had just told them of his coming death. It surprised them more than all his miracles. Eight long weary days they pondered the strange fact, so unlikely if he were really "the Christ." He told them that they might also have to lay down their own lives. They think of him as failing, of his mission as ending in defeat and of their own utter loss as those embarked in a ruined cause. Never was their faith so low. In this condition they fail utterly to do the mighty works they had performed so easily a month before. He takes a part of them up Tabor, or, it may be, a spur of Hermon. They are weak in faith in him as "the one sent of God." But in the Tabor manifestation they see at once *who Christ is*. The heavenly glory is about him. They can doubt no more. The conversation of the denizens of the other world is about that death which these disciples thought so shameful, but which now is so glorious. Their faith needed a palpable object-lesson. Tabor gives it. They accept his death, perhaps also their own, as an event connected with the eternal glory. And how much the transfiguration meant to the world at large as the completion of its idea of Christ! He had shown his power over nature, in stilling the tempest, in feeding the hungry thousands, over man's body by healing his diseases, by giving sight

to the blind and tongues to the dumb, over man's soul by forgiving sins, over the lower world of evil spirits by casting out demons from those who had been allowed to receive that peculiar visitation. But there remained one other department in which there was need that he should show his sovereignty. Had he power over the world of holy souls? Was heaven also allegiant to him? Would it acknowledge him? Would those who do God's will in the highest places of the universe, the most select spirits, come at *his* bidding as demons had gone at his command? See! The heavens open. Moses the greatest of lawgivers, and Elias the greatest of prophets, who for centuries have been serving in heaven, *came at his word!* When works are done that show power over nature the world thinks, though incorrectly, of physical might. When works are done that show power over the world of evil souls, men can say that Satan has them in allegiance. But none save God himself can command the allegiance of the holy, and have them obey. More striking was the Bethany miracle. More impressive to the general sense of the world was the resurrection of our Lord himself. But no event of all his eventful life so exhibits his power, his majesty, his glory, as does this obedience of souls so long disembodied, so long serving in the interior service of heaven, the souls standing nearest the Great White Throne.

Note —While the object-lesson so described at pp 187-180 was surely intended, an instructive lesson was also intended against the prevailing *human* sacrifices of the false religions out of which Abraham had just come, and which God could not but disapprove —*Ed*

REVELATION.

REVELATION in its widest sense may be described as "the self-manifestation of God" Whatever serves to make God known to man is a revelation either of His attributes or of His existence I assume the reality of God's existence It would be beyond the scope of my present paper to attempt to give reasons which justify this assumption I will, therefore, simply assume that God exists, and pass on at once to consider the means by which He is made known

In the first place, then, there is a *Natural Revelation* The knowledge of God is in some sense natural to the mind of man Whether it is due to an original instinct and springs from the natural constitution of our reason, or whether it is arrived at by a process of inference, or whether it is due to a primitive communication from God that has been handed down from generation to generation, we need not now stop to enquire

As a matter of fact we find that the idea of God is practically *universal* It is not the exclusive possession of a few master minds, nor is it the product of civilization and education, it is common to every age and every race, to the men of genius and to the masses, to peoples the most savage and the most civilized And so even the ordinary course of nature has awakened within the hearts of men a sense of God's presence As they looked upon nature in its beauty and its grandeur, in its apparent capriciousness and its wonderful order and regularity, it revealed to them the existence of a Divine Spirit The heavens declared to them the glory of God and the firmament showed His handiwork They heard God speaking in the roaring thunder, the whispering breeze and the babbling brook They saw Him making the clouds His chariot and walking upon the wings of the wind They were reminded of His glory and power as they saw the sun going forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber and

rejoicing as a giant to run his course And so too they have seen the working of Divine Power throughout the whole course of human history, in the rise and fall of states and empires, in the inspirations of genius, and the courage of heroes If they were happy God smiled, if they suffered, He frowned. Their sense of justice appealed to Him for protection, then guilty conscience trembled at His wrath Thus nature and conscience are a revelation of God They awaken the idea of God that lies dormant in man's soul and lead man to fear Him as their judge, to appeal to His protection as their Father and to trust Him as their Saviour What need then is there for anything further?

If there is already a revelation of God in the mind of man and in the ordinary facts of nature, what need is there of any special manifestation of God by any means outside the ordinary course of nature or the ordinary laws of the human mind? To answer this question, we have only to consider the actual state of religion in the world around us As a matter of fact, mankind have not been able through this natural revelation to arrive at a clear and consistent idea of God or their own relation towards Him It is not simply that the religious idea assumes different forms among different peoples and races, but the ideas which men form about God are absolutely contradictory and absolutely irreconcilable Some believe that God is one, others that there are many gods, and like the Greeks of old they people Heaven with a little commonwealth Some believe that God is morally perfect Others attribute to their gods the meanest motives and the basest passions of human nature Some believe that God is the moral and providential, Ruler of the world, and is actively engaged in the government of the universe Others, like Epicurus, believe that the gods live at ease in an atmosphere of serene indifference to the concerns of the material world or of human history Some believe that God is a Personal Being, endowed with moral attributes, such as justice, wisdom, and love Others that God is an imper-

sonal Spirit Some believe that God is absolutely distinct from the universe, others that God is one with the universe, that God is everything and every thing is God.

Now it is evident from these contradictory ideas about religion that the human mind, when left to itself, has, as a matter of fact, failed to attain to a true knowledge of God No one looking fairly at the present state of religious belief among the majority of the human race could deny that a *special revelation is at any rate desirable*

But here it may be objected that, granting that a special revelation is *desirable*, this is no proof that a revelation is at all *probable* It might be argued that religious knowledge can surely grow and develop just like other branches of human knowledge If the idea of God is natural to the human mind and if the ordinary facts of conscience and nature serve to awaken the thought of God and reveal His attributes, then why should not the exercise of observation and reflection be enough to lead man to a true knowledge of God in the same way as it has led him to a true knowledge of nature It might be argued that the fact of men holding contradictory and erroneous opinions about religion, and of a large number being more or less indifferent to religious truth, is in no sense peculiar to religion The same thing might be said of physical science If we take any of the sciences, such as astronomy or chemistry, and trace back their past history we find that they had their origin in a mass of superstitious and erroneous beliefs It is only in comparatively recent days that the fundamental principles of a true science of astronomy were discovered Up to the time of Galileo the whole science of astronomy was based on the fundamentally erroneous principle that the earth was the centre of our system, and up to the time of Newton astronomers were totally ignorant of the great principle of gravitation, which governs and explains the complex movements of the heavenly bodies It might have been said years ago, that the contradictory theories of physical science demanded a

special revelation Yet if physical science has been allowed to grow through the ordinary exercise of man's natural faculties, why should we expect that religious knowledge should be imparted in any different way?

Now this objection seems at first sight a very specious one, but it is really based upon a false analogy, and entirely leaves out of sight the fundamental difference between the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of God Nature is accessible to direct observation, and God is not We can see and touch nature, and we can assure ourselves of its phenomena by the evidence of our own senses But we have no direct and immediate vision of God "No man hath seen God at any time" We may compare our knowledge of God to a child's knowledge of an absent father whom it has never seen It has an idea of him in its mind It hears others talk of him It may see marks of his handiwork in the home in which it lives It might possibly by the exercise of reason argue that it must have a father like other children But at the same time it could not directly assure itself of its father's existence It would always be in danger of forming perverted ideas about him which it would be utterly unable to correct, or of forgetting about him altogether, and the result of this is that reflection and observation cannot of themselves build up a science of religion in the same way as they build up a science of nature

The great weakness of any system of natural religion always has been and always must be the uncertainty which besets its fundamental principles The very existence of God presents itself as a truth which men cannot verify It is not, like the existence of nature, a matter of direct observation It is not like the axioms of geometry, or the laws of mathematics, a necessary principle of thought The universal belief in it appears as a natural instinct which men cannot account for or verify They do not feel able to assert that its truth is absolutely certain, they can only assert at most that it is highly probable Now this uncertainty as to the very foundation of natural religion necessarily

makes it impossible for religion to grow as a science in the same way as astronomy, or mathematics have grown. It is based on a probability, not a certainty. And whereas theories about nature can be verified by a direct appeal to facts, no theories about religion can be verified by a direct vision of God. While, therefore, the growth of man's reasoning powers and the advance of culture and civilization bring with them an ever-increasing clearness and certainty in man's knowledge of nature, they bring no greater clearness or certainty, but rather the reverse, in his knowledge of God.

Hence we find that the most thoughtful men in every age of the world's history have felt deeply the inadequacy and uncertainty of natural religion. Buddha, as the result of his profound reflections and meditations, denied or ignored the existence both of God and of the human soul. And in the writings of Plato one of the most ideal and most spiritual philosophers of ancient Greece, there is a striking passage in which he expresses his sense of the uncertainty of religious truth. It occurs in a dialogue represented as having been held between the great Greek Philosopher Socrates and some of his disciples, and in the course of it, after Socrates has described the relation of the soul and body and the probability of its existence after death, one of his hearers answers him as follows —

"Well, Socrates, then I will tell you my difficulty. For I dare say that you, Socrates, feel as I do how very hard or almost impossible is the attainment of certainty about questions such as these in the present life, and yet I should deem him a coward who did not probe what is said about them to the uttermost, or whose heart failed him before he had examined them on every side. Before he should persevere until he has achieved one of two things: either he should discover, or be taught the truth about them, or if this is impossible I would have him take the best and most irrefragable of human theories, and let this be the raft on which he sails through life, not without risk, as I admit, if he cannot find some word of God which will more surely and safely carry him through." — *Phædo*, p. 85

We see here the attitude of a philosophic mind towards the truths of natural religion. He feels that

religious truth is a matter of the deepest importance, and that a man is bound to seek after it to the best of his ability. He would be a coward not to do so. If he can find nothing better, he must take the most reliable human theory about God and the soul on which to sail through the sea of human life. But if possible, he is to seek for some word of God, some special revelation, which may carry him safely and surely.

I need only refer to the names of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, and the whole school of modern Agnostics to prove that in more modern days thought and reflection are not of themselves sufficient to gain for man a knowledge of God. To many philosophers of modern Europe, God is simply "the great Unknown."

If, then, religion is to be preserved and purified, and the contradictory beliefs and opinions of the human mind are to be collected and reduced to one harmonious system, it cannot be done by the natural exercise of our faculties, but it imperatively demands a revelation. Mankind needs that "word of God" of which Plato wrote to bring to him certainty and conviction. Looking then at the actual facts of human history and the actual state of religious belief in the world, we see that a revelation is urgently needed, if religion is to be preserved from corruption and decay, and if we admit that there is a personal God who is capable of giving a revelation, we must admit too that a revelation is highly probable.

Let us then advance a step further, and ask whether any such revelation has ever been given? Is there any divine word, such as Plato longed for, which we can trust to carry us safely through the voyage of life? The answer comes back to us from many quarters. The ancient Greeks believed in the inspiration of his poets. He believed that the gods and goddesses had often walked the earth in human form, and had frequent intercourse with man. The Hindu believes that his Vedas are the breath of Brahma, the Muhammadan that his Koran was dictated by Allah, and the Christian that his Bible is the word of God.

Are all these the divine words we ask for ? That is impossible. It is no doubt conceivable that God might have given different revelations to different races or different ages of the World's history. It is conceivable that God might have given to different races different forms of worship and different modes of spiritual education. But it is impossible that God could have given different revelations of religious truth which are absolutely contradictory. One of our fundamental ideas about God is that 'God is truth'.

Let me refer once more to the words of the Greek Philosopher, Plato, when protesting against Greek mythology which represented God as untruthful.

"God is perfectly simple and true, both in deed and word, he changes not, he deceives not, either by dream or waking vision, by sign or word."

It is then utterly at variance with our whole conception of God as a God of truth to suppose that he could have given different revelations of himself which are absolutely contradictory.

It is absolutely impossible therefore that the mythology of Greeks and Romans, the Vedas of the Hindus, the Koran of the Muhammadans and the Bible of the Christians should all be revelations from God.

There cannot be, as the Greek mythology asserts, many gods if as the Koran declares there is only one God. It is impossible that God should be both absolutely one in nature and person as the Koran asserts, and that in the unity of his nature there should be a threefold personality, as the Christian Bible teaches. It is absolutely impossible that God, as the Vedas assert, should be himself the universe, and also be absolutely distinct from it as the Bible teaches. It cannot be true both that there is one God and many gods, that in God there is one personality and a threefold personality, that God is identical with the material universe and distinct from the universe. The ideas are absolutely and fundamentally contradictory. They cannot possibly be reconciled. We cannot then say that all these are revelations from God. If we did we should make God

a liar We must decide then which is the true revelation and which is not

Our next question must be what are the marks of a true revelation from God? How is it possible to prove that an assumed revelation is really divine? Now we need not discuss the question in what ways it is impossible for God to hold direct communication with the spirit of man We can imagine many ways in which this might take place But the important and practical question for us is how we can test the claims of those who claim to have received such a revelation, and so speak to us as the prophets and messengers of God

Now for the sake of simplifying the question and putting it in a more definite and concrete form, let us suppose that a man came before us and stated that he was inspired by God, and had received a direct revelation of divine truth, and so called upon us to accept his teaching about God, man's duty towards Him and the destiny of the human soul, as though it were the teaching of God Himself What proofs should we require before we accepted such a claim?

(1) In the first place then we should scrutinize very carefully the character of the man himself We should consider whether he was likely to be an impostor, or if not an impostor, whether he was a fanatical enthusiast who was likely to have mistaken his own dreams and fancies for a voice from heaven The human mind we know is subject to the most extraordinary delusions, and even if a man sincerely believed that he had received a divine revelation, it would not prove that he was really inspired

Or, again, if we found that he was a vain, ambitious man, we should suspect the purity of his motives If we saw that his own life was in direct opposition to the revelation which he professed to bring from God, we should suspect his sincerity In fact, we should require him to show such evidence of wisdom and sober-mindedness that we could not imagine his being deluded, and such evidence of sincerity

humility, and unselfishness, that we could not imagine his deceiving us. And this proof of the genuineness of his message would evidently grow stronger in proportion to our conviction of the perfection of his character. One of the strongest proofs of the reality of a revelation would be, that it was delivered to us by a man of a perfect and sinless character.

(2) And then in the next place we should see whether he could show any credentials, whether he could give any outward token of his being a messenger of God.

When any Governor or Sovereign sends a messenger to a distant part of his dominions, he always sends with him some credentials, such as a written commission, in order to prove that he is the accredited envoy of the king. Now in the same way we should naturally expect that, if God sent to us a messenger to claim our faith and obedience, He would also give him some distinct mark of this divine mission. If, for instance, the man who claimed a divine mission could show that he possessed a superhuman knowledge and could predict the future, or that he possessed a superhuman power, and could control the powers and forces of nature, and perform miracles, if he could heal diseases by a touch or a word, and could restore the dead to life, we should feel instinctively that these were credentials of his mission, and that no man could do these mighty works except God were with him.

(3) And then, lastly, we should look to the nature and character of the message itself. We should consider whether it bore upon its face the stamp of its divine origin, and whether it was in accordance with the fundamental principles of our own reason and conscience. We should not indeed expect it to be at once perfectly intelligible. Nay, on the contrary, we should rather expect it to be partially unintelligible. It would, in fact, be one of the marks of a true revelation of God's nature that it should contain mysteries and truths which the human reason can only partially comprehend. There is a well-known saying of an ancient writer with regard to one of the doctrines of

Christianity which was objected to as absurd.—“I believe, it because it is absurd” No doubt the saying is a paradox, still it contains a very important truth. A divine revelation never can be perfectly intelligible to man. God’s nature is infinite, and man’s reason is finite. The whole being and attributes of God infinitely transcend the understanding of man, and there is nothing within the range of human experience which can enable man perfectly to comprehend God. The whole subject therefore of God’s nature is and must be a mystery. And any true revelation of God must of necessity be above and beyond reason. In any true revelation therefore there must be difficulties which the human reason cannot explain. If any one came to us and gave to us an account of God’s nature which was quite simple and presented us with no difficulties, we should say it was not true.

But, while we should expect a true revelation to be above reason and to contain doctrines which were partly unintelligible, on the other hand, we could not accept a revelation which flatly contradicted reason and conscience, and was entirely opposed to their fundamental principles.

It would, therefore, be impossible for us to accept any revelation which contradicted the one great principle which lies at the root of our whole conception of God, that God is perfect. Men may form different ideas of perfection, but all, I think, who could reason about God, would accept this as a first principle of reason and conscience that God is perfect, God must be perfect in wisdom, power, justice and love. His will must be absolutely free. His being must be self-contained. It must require nothing besides itself to complete either its goodness or its greatness. God must want nothing, depend on nothing, and be limited or controlled by nothing.

Now, taking this as our fundamental idea of God let us see what it further implies.

(1) First, then, it implies that God is one, that he is eternal, and that all things derive their existence

from Him There cannot be two Gods If so, there would be two wills, each limiting the other Neither, therefore, would be absolutely free, and neither, therefore, would be perfect Every system of dualism or polytheism is essentially irrational It contradicts the very first principle which reason lays down about the nature of God, and is, therefore, incredible

(ii) In the second place it implies that He is a *Personal Being* Personality belongs essentially to our idea of a perfect spiritual being The universal reason of mankind instinctively places the lower animals above the material world and man above the lower animals, because in the latter it sees the germs of personality, and in man personality fully developed Impersonal spirit would be no higher in the scale of creation than impersonal matter To conceive, therefore, of God as Impersonal is to place God lower in the scale of perfection than man himself It degrades God from a moral being endowed with the noble attributes of wisdom, justice and love, to a mere impersonal law We could not, therefore, accept Pantheism Pantheism destroys God's personality and, therefore, also destroys God's perfection

(iii) In the third place it implies that God is absolutely good We cannot conceive of God as being unjust, or unwise, or unloving God's perfection implies that God is morally perfect

Now this, at once, sets aside all those systems of religion in which God is represented as being morally imperfect and actuated by low passions and mean motives, or as being subject to the moral weakness of human nature They are as much an insult to reason as they are to the goodness of God.

But further, this principle of the absolute goodness of God brings us face to face with one of the mysteries of the Divine Nature which to human reason alone is insoluble It is this —

If God is absolutely good, then God must be perfect love, since love is the highest attribute of moral goodness, and we cannot conceive of moral perfection without love

But, on the other hand, reason tells us that God is one. If, then, God is one, what possibility is there of the exercise of love within the Divine Nature itself? Love demands an object. Self-love is not true love and certainly not the highest form of love. It may be answered that God created spiritual beings in order that he might have fit objects for the exercise of His love. But then God would be imperfect. He would not be self-contained. He would require something beside Himself for the exercise of His highest attribute. Before the existence of created beings God's love lay dormant. And however far back in the distant ages of the past we push the first act of creation, still God existed for an eternity before that, and if during that eternity there was no object of God's love, then God was imperfect.

Reason and conscience then here seem to be in conflict. Reason demands that God should be absolutely one. Conscience that in the Divine Nature there should be plurality.

Now, in conclusion, we have to ask, is there any system of religion in the world which can fulfil all these conditions and furnish all these proofs of its Divine origin? Yes, there is one and there is *only one*, and that is Christianity.

In the first place, the revelation of Christianity is delivered to us by the one man who can claim a perfect and sinless character. Pontius Pilate, his Roman judge, declared, "I find no fault in this man," and that has been the verdict of history. This cannot be said of any other religion in the world. Muhammad confessed himself a sinner. The writers of the Vedas are utterly unknown. Their very names are buried in oblivion. But Jesus Christ is a historic person. We have the records of His life, and we have the accusations of His enemies and the verdict of His judge. He still challenges the world with the challenge that no one has yet been able to meet, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

And, in the second place, Christianity is proved by the credentials of miracle and prophecy. Muhammad

disclaimed entirely the power of working miracles, there is no record of the lives of the authors of the Vedas. But the whole course of the Christian revelation is marked at every stage by a series of wonderful miracles and prophecies which prove the continuous intervention of God in human history. Take only the miracles of Jesus Christ. They were not performed in some distant prehistoric period or in some obscure corner of the world, but in the presence of multitudes, before friends and foes. His foes could not deny them. The most they could do was to ascribe them to magic. Take only the crowning miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. No magic could have produced it. No criticism can destroy its credibility. It is attested by an overwhelming weight of historical evidence, and it thus forms a stamp and seal set by God Himself to attest the truth of Christ's teaching.

And lastly, Christianity and Christianity alone, has presented to the world a revelation of God as absolutely perfect. It alone has reconciled the unity of God with the perfect love of God. It teaches that God is one in nature, but it teaches that in the unity of that one nature there are three personalities united from all eternity in the bonds of perfect love. And thus the doctrine of the Trinity, which is to some so great a stumbling block, is seen to be absolutely essential to God's moral perfection.

And Christianity reveals, as no other religion has ever done, both the absolute justice and the absolute mercy of God. It shows how He vindicated the claims of law by demanding a perfect satisfaction for the sins of man, and at the same time and in the same act showed His infinite mercy and infinite love to man by Himself, in the person of His Eternal Son, condescending to pay the penalty that man owed to His justice. In this fact is contained the supreme revelation of God's love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Christianity thus claims the faith and obedience of every man. It was proclaimed as a religion for the world. It was not for the Jews only or for the West only, but for all mankind. "Go ye," said Jesus Christ to His disciples, "and make disciples of all nations." It declares as the decree of God, that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ.

"He that believeth," said Christ, "shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned."

These are tremendous claims. But Christianity has every proof that man could reasonably ask for. It was delivered by a perfect and sinless character. It is accredited by well-attested miracles and prophecies. It holds up an ideal of God which is absolutely perfect. We believe, as Christians, that it is the one revelation of absolute truth which God has given to mankind, and it is for this reason that we urge its claims upon the people of India, because we believe that it is necessary alike to the salvation of the individual soul and the regeneration of mankind. It is no doubt a great claim to make upon men to ask them to give up a religion which has been interwoven with their social customs and their national history. But we do not hesitate to do so because we are sure that Christianity is a revelation of eternal truth, and that it alone can give to India a higher, purer, and nobler life. Centuries ago our forefathers were savages and barbarians when the people of India had reached a high pitch of civilization. What has given to Englishmen that energy and power that has spread their civilization over the face of the world? Christianity, and Christianity alone. And one day it will do the same for India. Christ came, "that men might have life and might have it more abundantly."

LORD LYTTLETON ON ST PAUL.

THE Lord Lyttleton of whom we speak was an active politician and statesman of the reign of George the Second. He was well acquainted with the world and at the same time studious and reflective. As a poet he enjoys the honour of a place in "Johnson's Lives." His "Dialogues of the Dead" exhibits him as the thoughtful moralist, while his voluminous but heavy "History of Henry the Second" testifies to his ability to investigate fact and weigh evidence.

The period in which he lived was not favourable to Christian studies or to godly living. General scepticism in sentiment, and a bounding profligacy in life marked the whole period in which Lord Lyttleton lived and acted, and he did not escape unscathed in the furnace of evil in which he lived. Johnson who sketches his life testifies, "He had, in the pride of youthful confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of Christianity," and it was not till he was nearly forty years of age that he was led into that course of reading and reflection of which Johnson writes, "His studies, being honest, ended in conviction."

We do not know with certainty what were the facts which first arrested his attention, or the arguments which overcame his scepticism, but we do know from his own writings that he regarded the conversion of St Paul, and his after life as an Apostle, taken in connexion with his undisputed writings, as containing on one single and limited line of evidence a force and conclusiveness sufficient to convince an honest enquirer, or, to use his own words, "I thought the conversion and Apostleship of St Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a Divine revelation."

It appears that in a conversation with Gilbert West, the author of an invaluable monograph on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Lord Lyttleton had expressed

his opinion as given above, and that at his friend's request he engaged to reduce to writing the argument which seemed to his own mind so convincing. This engagement he observed, and sent to his friend his "Observations on the conversion and Apostleship of St Paul."

Before I proceed to sketch the argument of his letter, I would remark that it has now been before the world for a hundred and seventeen years, and that while particular expressions and conclusions here and there have been questioned, no opponent of Christianity has ever written a reply to it. It will be well also to notice that, although Lord Lyttleton wrote before the birth of the modern school of scientific criticism of the books of the Bible, he takes for granted only such points as are at the present time regarded as established by the more recent sceptical writers. He postulates nothing beyond the points which Strauss admits, and which Renan in his more recent work takes as certain. I speak of admitted *facts*. Strauss, Paulus, and Renan offer varying and contradictory explanations of the facts and they differ as to the actuality of certain things lying outside the facts which are taken for granted in the "Observations," but, with Lord Lyttleton, they admit the existence of Saul of Tarsus—his eminent acquaintance with Judaism and addiction to its most severe form, that of Pharisaic scrupulosity. They admit his persecution of the followers of the Crucified—his journey to Damascus with authority from the Jewish Chief Priests to bind the followers of Jesus whom he might find in that city, and they also admit that from some cause or other his red-handed opponent became a preacher of the faith which before he hated, and a companion and fellow worker with those whom he had sought to destroy. They regard as actual events the incidents in his after life which are contained in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which history even Renan ascribes to a date not later than A. D. 80, and finally they assert the authenticity of those Epistles to which Lord Lyttleton turns for

evidence and illustration, admitting that some of those letters were written by Paul at least as early as the year A D 58

Thus the most destructive schemes of criticism which were ever applied to the books of Scripture have, by a process of mutual destruction and antagonistical admission, left a residuum of confessed fact, which contains all that is necessary for the validity of the argument of the "Observations"

I now proceed to lay the argument before you, not in the fulness of detail given by Lord Lytton, but with sufficient fulness and accuracy to convey the general results at which he arrives

The event with which we have to do is thus narrated by Paul himself at Cæsarea in the presence of Festus, the Roman Governor, and Agrippa, a Jewish King, and before many of his enemies who knew his history and were ready to detect any error or falsehood in his statement—

"My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, who knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our Fathers unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come, for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at mid-day, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And I said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And He said, 'I am

Jesus whom thou persecutest But rise, and stand upon thy feet for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in me' Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts xxi 4—20)

On another occasion, defending himself before the Jews in Jerusalem, he gives in substance the same statement, but adds other particulars —

"And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said unto me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do' And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews who dwell there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, 'Brother Saul receive the sight' And the same hour I looked up upon him And he said "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord " (Acts xxi 10—16)

The same historian who records these statements of the convert, and was himself a companion of Paul in much of his life of ministry, narrates the incident in another chapter of the book of the Acts, mentioning other circumstances besides those recounted by Paul in his apologies before his enemies—as that Saul in a vision saw Ananias before he came to him, coming in and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight And that when Ananias had spoken to him, "immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales" (Acts ix 12, 18)—All these statements are in the book of the Acts of the Apostles State-

ments made by Paul in letters which he addressed to various Churches and persons are agreeable to them, and they occur in letters of which Lord Lyttleton says their authenticity "cannot be doubted without overturning all rules by which the authority and genuineness of any writings can be proved or confirmed," and which since the writing of the "Observations" have been subjected to the test of modern criticism in the hands of Paulus, Strauss, Renan, and others, and have stood that test beyond all question. Writing to the Christian Churches, which he had founded in Galatia, Paul says, "I certify you brethren that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For, I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal : 11—16)

To the Philippians he writes, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the Church, But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Philipp iii 4-7)

In a letter to Timothy, who was one of his converts and a fellow-labourer in the Gospel, he writes, "I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim : 12-13)

Elsewhere he calls himself 'An apostle by the will of God, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ

and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead" (2 Cor 1, 1, Col 1, 1, 1 Tim 1, 1, Gal 1, 1) and concerning Jesus Christ, he asserts in a letter to Corinth, "Last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. xv 8)

Here are assertions made to his enemies and his friends in public apologies and private letters, to Churches which he had gathered and to friends who were fellow workers. These assertions were made before and to those who had the best means for ascertaining their truth or falsehood. They were made in the emotion of public debate and in the quiet hours of imprisonment. They were not disproved then. They have never been disproved since. What is the great point which they all include? If words have any meaning, Paul asserts for himself, and the historian Luke asserts for him, a "miraculous call which made him an apostle."

In that call we have the beginning of a life of ministry lasting for, certainly, more than thirty years, during which period it may be followed in the book of the Acts, and by the light of the information contained in many letters which he wrote.

The account which Christian believers give of the matter is that it was true,—true, not only in the incidents which even sceptical criticism admits, but true also in the miraculous element, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the manifested glory of God—the voice from the brightness—the conversation between the prostrate persecutor and the exalted Jesus—the sudden blindness—the vision of Ananias—the message from God—and the instantaneous recovery of sight.

But believers know that there are many persons who do not admit this, and who endeavour to account for the admitted facts of the case on one assumption or another which excludes the miraculous elements.

Lord Lyttleton enumerates three suppositions which may possibly be made to account for the facts of the case without admitting the miraculous element, and we may feel secure in saying that no

other solution is possible. Our author thus states the case —

"It must of necessity be that the person asserting these things of himself and of whom they are related in so authentic a manner either was an impostor who said what he knew to be false with an intent to deceive, or he was an enthusiast, who by the force of an over heated imagination imposed on himself, or he was deceived by the fraud of others, and all that he said must be imputed to the power of this deceit, or what he declared to be the cause of his conversion and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen, and therefore the Christian religion is a Divine revelation."

The first three of these suppositions are those which we have to examine. If they fail I shall be fully justified in accepting the fourth, unless my readers will suggest some other solution not covered by these a task to which I seriously invite them, and which they will have to perform or be led to the conclusion that Paul's conversion was unmaculons and, in connexion with the events which followed, is a sufficient evidence that the Christian religion is from God.

First then we have to examine the assumption of imposture, that is to say that Paul said what he knew to be not true with intent to deceive. This assumption raises two difficulties, for it cannot be shown either that he could have any rational motives to undertake such an imposture, or that he could possibly have carried it on with any success by the means we know him to have employed.

When we search for motives to such an imposture, we are shut up to one of two—either the hope of advancing himself in his temporal interests, credit, or power, or the gratification of some of his passions under the authority of it by the means it afforded.

What hope of temporal interest had Saul, the Persecutor, when he became Paul the Apostle? Jesus had been crucified as an impostor and blasphemer, and by that crucifixion the Jewish conviction that He was not their promised Messiah and King had been confirmed. His disciples indeed asserted that he was risen from the dead, and confirmed or seemed to confirm

then statement by miracles, but the Jewish rulers were not convinced, and by imprisonment, beating and persecution unto death, manifested the unimplacable rage against the believers. Paul concurred in these cruelties, voted for the death of the Christians in judicial assemblies, aided at their martyrdom, and in the intensity of his zeal persecutes them to strange cities, going with authority and commission to Damascus, to hale them to prison and death. Then it was and under those circumstances that Paul became a Christian. What wealth could he anticipate? All wealth and the power of conferring wealth were with the party he left. Those whom he joined were indigent men, oppressed and kept down from all means of improving their fortune. Some few disciples were better provided than others and aided the poorer, but during the lifetime of Paul, the whole community were not more than barely supplied with the necessaries of life, and Paul, so far from availing himself of their veneration for him to secure wealth, refused oftentimes, even in the Churches he had founded, to accept aught at their hands. Of this abundant evidence exists in his own statements made to the various Churches. Thus he writes twenty-four years after his conversion in a letter to Corinth "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labour, working with our own hands" (1 Cor. iv. 11, 12).—A year later, in A.D. 60, he writes again to Corinth thus "I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you" (2 Cor. xii. 14). Appealing to the Christians in Thessalonica, at a somewhat earlier date, he says, "Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness. For ye remember brethren, our labours and travail, for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God" (1 Thess. ii. 5, 9). And face to face with the ministers of the Ephesian Church, he thus appeals to them "I have coveted no

man's silver, or gold, or apparel Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts xx 33—34)

It is clear then that neither could Paul have anticipated wealth as the reward of submission to the Gospel, nor did he care to take even such support and emolument as the poor Christians might have been able to confer on him The hope of fortune would have bound him to the Jewish rulers When he broke with them he faced and he found poverty

But perhaps contemning wealth he was animated by the prospects of credit or reputation That also rested with those whom he left "The sect he embraced was under the greatest and most universal contempt of any then in the world" What gain of reputation could come to the disciple of Gamaliel, the member for the Sanhedrim, the trusted ambassador of the rulers of the people, by joining himself to a party without birth, education or rank—whose works were attributed to imposture or magic, whose founder had died a felon's death, and whose central and fundamental preaching, Christ crucified, was to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness? (1 Cor i 23) Experience did but confirm his necessary anticipation of shame and reproach A quarter of a century after the vision at Damascus, he wrote to the Corinthians—"We are made as the filth of the world—the offscouring (*περισθαρματα* refuse—offal), of all things unto this day" (1 Cor iv 13) Very certainly the bubble reputation could neither have lured him nor rewarded him

But perhaps it was the love of power—that "infirmity of noble minds!" "Power? Over whom? Over a flock of sheep driven to the slaughter, whose Shepherd Himself had been murdered a little before!" What power could he dare to hope for, which would be of any avail against the power, now energized and sharpened by hatred to one who had forsaken and betrayed them, which was on the side of those he left?

Not will his after life and teaching show that he sought or regarded power. He affected no superiority over the other Apostles. He termed himself "the least of them," (1 Cor xv 9), and "less than the least of all saints" (Ephs iii 8). Did he try to form a party for himself, or to elevate himself to primacy? Hear his appeal, 'Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name' (1 Cor i 13—15). "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor iii 5). "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor iv, 5). Moreover, Paul affected no earthly power. "He innovated nothing in government or civil affairs, he meddled not with legislation, he formed no commonwealths, he raised no seditions." "Obedience to rulers was the doctrine he taught to the Churches he founded, and what he taught he himself practised" (Rom xiii). It is certain that his high birth and better education and knowledge of the world gave him opportunities for pre-eminence, but it is not less certain that he made even light of these advantages esteeming those with whom he was associated as "follow-labourers" and "fellow-servants," and distinctly affirming, "I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, but determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor ii 1, 2, 5).

On the other hand, while the Gospel could not tempt Paul by promises of wealth, or reputation, or power, and he found in effect that in serving Christ he embraced poverty and shame, he did by the very fact of submitting himself to Jesus as Master and Lord put from him wealth and reputation and power which were actually his in possession, or were the certain reward of continuance in his course as an opponent of the Gospel.

"Upon the whole then" said Lord Lyttleton, at this point, "I think I have proved that the desire of wealth, or fame, or power could be no motive to make St Paul a convert to Christ, but that on the contrary he must have been checked by that desire, as well as by the just apprehension of many inevitable and insupportable evils, from taking a part so contradictory to his past life, to all the principles he had imbibed, and all the habits he had contracted"

But it may be said Paul was actuated by the desire of gratifying some irregular passion under cover of the Christian religion, and by the means which it afforded. Undoubtedly such persons have been—men who have desired to set themselves free from the restraints of government, law, and morality—but there is nothing in the teaching or in the life of the Apostle to give the slightest strength to this objection. "His writings breathe nothing but the strictest morality, obedience to magistrates, order and government, with the utmost abhorrence of all licentiousness, idleness, or loose behaviour, under the cloak of religion." As confessedly among the Jews, so among the Christians his conversation and manners are blameless (See Rom xi and xii.) It was no libertine who could appeal to those among whom he had lived, and whom he had won to the Gospel, "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor of guile. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Thess ii 3, 10) "We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man" (2 Cor vii 2, see also 2 Cor i 12, and iv 2)

Is it said that all this notwithstanding, Paul might have been an impostor in that for the sake of advancing the morality of the Gospel he gave himself to pious frauds—doing evil that he might promote good? It is true here also that some men have thus acted, as Lycurgus in the case of the Spartans, or Numa in the case of the Romans, who lent themselves to superstitions, which they did not believe, that they might

advance things which they held to be useful, but let it be noted that neither their superstition nor their teaching brought on them persecution and enmity while in the case of Paul not only was the morality he taught unpalatable, but the persecution he endured sprang from enmity to the *facts* on which he based the morality. Nor must it be forgotten that he of whom this supposition is hinted wrote these words "There are those who say, Let us do evil, that good may come! whose damnation is just" (Rom iii 8).

We may then safely conclude that no *rational* motive existed which could impel Saul of Tarsus to become, as an impostor, Paul the Apostle, and if any motive existed to such a course, it must have been simply *capricious*, as men sometimes act on absurd impulses, they know not why. But to this the answer is simple. There is absolutely nothing in the conduct or the writing of the Apostle which can for a moment justify the thought. Nothing capricious or unreasoning appears in the methods by which he promoted the Gospel. On the contrary his is a life constantly guided by thoughtfulness, prudence and sustained purpose.

But if any one, in the face of evidence given thus far, should still insist that Paul was in his conversion an impostor unmixed, or an impostor who was a strange specimen of a capricious fool to boot, let him consider that "he could not possibly have carried on his imposture to success by the means that we know he employed."

Paul did not found Christianity. He accepted an existing religion, and did not draw the doctrines he proclaimed from his imagination. He had not learned of Jesus, nor had he had any connexion with the Apostles except as their persecutor. How could he obtain a sufficiently accurate knowledge of their teaching but by intercourse with them? He set up as an Apostle of their faith, but with such ignorance of the teaching of the other Apostles, that either they must have been forced to ruin his credit, or he would have

ruined them. They could not but have detected the variance, in a thousand points, between his fancies and the teaching which they had received from Jesus Himself. He must therefore act in confederacy with the Apostles, not only to gain an accurate acquaintance with the Gospel, but also to learn the secret arts with which they beguiled men into the common belief that they worked miracles. Now how did he incline them to communicate with him on these essential matters? By furiously persecuting them and their brethren up to the moment of his conversion? This he did and then they immediately entrust their capital enemy with all the secrets of their imposture.

"Would men so secret, as not to be drawn by the most severe persecutions to say one word which would convict them of being impostors, confess themselves such to their persecutor in hopes of his being their accomplice?"

Not this only, if his conversion was unreal, and the events connected with it non-existent, consider the risk of exposure from those who journeyed with him—employed with him by the Jewish rulers to extirpate Christianity—and breathing his old temper of opposition to the faith to which he now addicted himself. Again, he was to be instructed by one at Damascus, and the teacher and his disciple met as absolute strangers each to the other, and this man, Ananias, "who had goodly report of all the Jews who dwelt in Damascus," and an excellent character, must have been confederate with the impostor in his guilt. But on the supposition of imposture how futile this connexion with Ananias, who, appearing thus once in the affair, is never heard of afterwards—then whole known intercourse having been private, and Ananias having knowledge of his own and Paul's dishonesty.

But consider also how, some years afterwards, when pleading before Agrippa, in the presence of Festus, he was bold enough to appeal to him upon his own knowledge of the truth of his story, and that in the presence of many only too ready and desirous of con-

victing him of falsehood and crime—"a very remarkable proof both of the notoriety of the facts, and the integrity of the man, who with so fearless a confidence could call upon a king to give testimony for him even while he was sitting in judgment upon him"

Then, inasmuch as he must secure his recognition as an Apostle by the Apostles and bring them to admit him into a participation of all their mysteries, doctrines, and designs, he was necessitated to court their society and win their good favour but this he did not do, for he went away to Arabia and then, returning to Damascus, did not go to Jerusalem till after three years (Gal 1 17—18), and while on the supposition of imposture, the Apostles and Churches must have known how and when he gained his knowledge of the Gospel, he ventured to assure the Galatians that he neither received his knowledge of men, nor was he taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1 12) Consider again how by rebuking his fellow Apostle Peter openly at Antioch, and defending that rebuke in his letter to the Galatians (Gal 2 11—14) he incited Peter to reveal, in self-defence or in anger any want of righteousness in himself "Accomplices in fraud are obliged to shew greater regard to each other, such freedom (of rebuke) belongs to truth alone"

The supposition of imposture cannot be adequately judged unless it be also remembered that Paul was devoted mainly to the propagation of the Gospel among the Gentiles in which enterprise he would have to contend with four adverse influences against which the help and presence of God could help him, but against which, on the supposition of imposture, he was utterly unprovided He had to contend 1 With the policy and power of the magistrates 2 With the interests, credit, and craft of the priests 3 With the prejudices and passions of the people 4 With the wisdom and pride of philosophers

Heathen magistrates permitted considerable laxity in the choice and worship of gods, but certainly did

not endure so exclusive a system as that of Christianity, which not only demanded a place and recognition, but asserted itself as true, and alone true. It did not ask a niche in the Pantheon, but set to work to rase the Pantheon with all its gods, and to erect on its ruins the temple of the true God. Judge then what chance of success Paul had at Ephesus, Corinth, and Athens, at all which places he founded Churches which presently after swept the idols away altogether.

Consider also the difficulty arising from the priesthood who, finding their craft in danger, could wield all the power of the State for the repression of the teaching they abhorred. These men might tolerate the easy atheistical philosopher who would be content with theorizing against religion and yet maintain the popular religions as useful cheats, but they would have no patience with the aggressive system which Paul propounded, which endured no rival near its throne.

And again consider the difficulties springing from the prejudices and passions of the people. In Judea the voice of the people often restrained the violence of the rulers in their opposition to Christianity but in the case of the Gentiles, intense and violent prejudices existed in favour of the popular religions, and were more than ever intense when opposing anything taught by a Jew—one of a nation on whom the then world looked with unutterable scorn. Such an one carried only new ideas when he appealed to the Gentiles, and told them that Jesus was the Christ of God. They expected no Christ, they allowed no such Scriptures as those to which Paul made his appeal. They had to be taught the New Testament, but were ignorant of the book of the old covenant on which the Apostles turned for evidence when seeking to convince the Jew. There was not even the common ground of Monotheism on which Paul and the Gentile populations could take their stand. Thus he must come before them with no political, or social, or religious authority, and bid them surrender the idolatry which gratified their tastes, ministered to their passions, and satisfied their lower

nature He bade them forsake these idolatries for the spiritual worship of "one invisible God and to accept salvation by the death and sufferings of a crucified Jew"—to their views such an one as a condemned criminal executed on the gallows would be to us

To these accumulated difficulties must be added those springing from the wisdom and pride of the philosophers They had prejudices of their own still more repugnant to the doctrines of the Gospel than those of the vulgar, more deeply rooted, and more obstinately fixed in the mind The wisdom on which they prided themselves—"their vain metaphysical speculations, their logical subtleties—then endless disputes—then high-flown conceits of the perfection and self-sufficiency of human wisdom—then dogmatical positiveness about doubtful opinion—then sceptical doubts about the most clear and certain truths" made the soil in which a humble stranger, a despised Jew, and in their eyes a contemptible apostate had to sow the seeds of the doctrine of Christ "If St Paul had had nothing to trust to but his own natural faculties, his own understanding, knowledge, and eloquence, could he have hoped to be, singly, a match for all then united against him? Could a teacher, unheard of before, from an obscure and unlearned part of the world, have withstood the authority of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, Arcesilaus, Carneades, and all the great names which held the first rank of human wisdom?"

"From all this it may, I think, be concluded that no human means employed by St Paul in his design of converting the Gentiles were, or could be, adequate to the great difficulties he had to contend with, or to the success that we know attended his work, and we can in reason ascribe that success to no other cause but the power of God, going along with and aiding his ministry, because no other was equal to the effects"

And on this follows the conclusion, that whatever Paul may have been, he was no impostor

But while many yield this point, they are yet unable to accept the miraculous element in the history of his

conversion, they fall back on the assumption that he "was an enthusiast, who by the force of an overheated imagination imposed on himself" Probably this opinion will impose on men only so long as they rest in generals, and fancy to themselves an enthusiast who is void of the qualities which constitute enthusiasm The general ingredients of enthusiasm, as men use the word, are great heats of temper, melancholy, ignorance, credulity and vanity, or self-conceit But of all these one only, that of a quick and warm disposition, is to be found in Paul as it was in the Gracchi, in Cato, in Brutus, and in many of the best and wisest of men And even this quality never had such command of the mind of Paul as to rule and darken his understanding The best test is this, that in things where principle was not concerned, he was so easy as to "become all things to all men" (1 Cor ix 20, 22) And that in moments of the most trying and exciting character he manifested prudence, and had regard to the civilities and decorums of society, as appears clearly in his behaviour when defending himself before Agrippa, Felix, and Festus His was a zeal ever tempered by prudence

Where again is the proof that he was a soul, melancholy enthusiast? Remorse he felt indeed for his former life as a persecutor, but it led him only to a new life of unwearyed and cheerful labour He inflicted on himself no gloomy penances or extravagant mortifications His holiness was the simplicity of a good life and the industry of a devoted Apostle He bore sufferings cheerfully, but he did not count them—even pleading his Roman citizenship to avoid being beaten, and at Athens he avoided the application of a capital law which forbade the introduction of a new god, by prudently laying hold on the presence of an altar to the Unknown God, and thus connecting his teaching of the living and true God with a recognised but unknown being "whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts xvii and Josephus *Cont Apion* Book II Ch 37) Paul indeed desired "to depart and to be with Christ," which he knew to

be better than his life of sorrow and suffering, but he sought not to die, and was ready to remain with the Churches he had founded, because his presence and leadership was an advantage to them. Willing to labour, ready to rest, and impressing the same condition of mind on multitudes, he cannot in any fairness be called a melancholy enthusiast.

Again, is there proof that Paul had the mark of ignorance? Hardly so when he was master of Jewish and Grecian learning, and in this respect commanded the enforced commendation of Festus, and on their own ground could cope with the Athenians on Areopagus. Nor is credulity—as distinguished from assent to truth on sufficient evidence—observable in Paul. He was in fact slow and hard of belief. The miracles done by the Saviour, the resurrection of Him who was crucified and buried, miracles wrought by Peter and John—even that well-known and much canvassed marvel, the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple (Acts iii), had not persuaded him to believe. Other miracles and several proclamations of the Gospel (Acts v 18, 32), with the eloquent defence of Stephen before the council had left him untouched—left him to attend the martyrdom of Stephen as consenting to his death (Acts viii and ix)—left him with his zeal against Christ only embittered and deepened, so that he set forth to Damascus, “breathing out threatenings and slaughter” against the disciples. All evidence up to this point he had resisted, “so that his mind far from being disposed to a credulous faith, or a too easy reception of any miracle worked in proof of the Christian religion, appears to have been barred against it by the most obstinate prejudices, as much as any man’s could possibly be, and from hence we may fairly conclude, that nothing less than the irresistible evidence of his own senses, clear from the possibility of doubt, could have overcome his unbelief.”

But these points failing, may not the position and work of Paul be accounted for by self-conceit, a quality which often places men in extraordinary circumstances,

and urges them to amazing doings? With high conceit of their importance, such men may mistake the workings of their own folly as the will of God, and may persuade themselves that, as favourites of heaven, they are the recipients of Divine revelations. Such were Montanus, Santa Theresa, Catharine of Sienna, Francis of Assisi, and others famous in the martyrology and sanctology of the Romish Church. But was Paul such an one, eaten up by self-conceit of knowledge, goodness and favour vain of personal gifts, higher genius, or Divine communications? Listen to his words to the Ephesians, the Corinthians, and to his beloved fellow-worker, Timothy. I who am "less than the least of all saints" (Eph iii, 8) "I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor xv 9) "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim i 15, 16). Only once does he use language opposed to this, saying, "I was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles" (2 Cor xi 5). And then the very safety of the Corinthian Church—then deliverance from false teachers—necessitated strong assertion of his authority among them, and even then he does it in such a way that his very boasting becomes the most evident humility, and does in no wise counteract his deliberate statements to the same Church (Vide 2 Cor xi 16-19, 30, 2 Cor xii 2, 6, 7) "Who then is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with

me" (2 Cor xii 1-5, 1 Cor iii 5-7, 1 Cor xv 10) And lastly, let us listen to the lesson which he laboured to impress on his followers, exalting a self renouncing love above all other things

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor xiii 1-4) He who can read this and trace the example which illustrates it in the life of the Apostle, and yet attribute his conversion and his Apostleship to self-conceit, must either mistake the sense of words, or be very determined to bring the Apostle in guilty Since, therefore, we do not find in the writings or acts of Paul those characteristics which mark the hot headed enthusiast, we may conclude he was not such an one But even did we find in him these qualities of mere enthusiasm it can be proved, "That he could not possibly have imposed on himself by any power of enthusiasm, either in regard to the miracle which caused his conversion, or to the consequential effects of it, or to some other circumstances which he bears testimony to in his epistles" Imagination is doubtless very strong, but it is strong in the direction imprinted on it by opinions held at the time of its working Now Paul on his journey to Damascus was undoubtedly possessed of opinions utterly hostile to Christianity, and his passions were at that time inflamed by the irritating consciousness of his past treatment of them, the pride of continuing in a line of conduct on which he had voluntarily and publicly entered, and the credit and praise that line of conduct obtained for him among the rulers of his nation

In this state of mind visions, marvels alarms, and any other thing acting on his imagination only, would

not undo the whole current and tide of his life and his opinions. Everything within him hurried him along in opposition to Jesus Christ, and when his imagination is impressed it is in a direction utterly hostile to his every opinion, passion, and line of conduct. But even were this self-deception under the force of mere imagination possible in Paul, how can it be explained that his fancy should be so real to others, that his companions also, nothing actually happening, should see the light and hear the voice, and fall from their horses and be speechless with terror" (Acts ix 3, Acts xxii 9, Acts ix 7, Acts xxvi 14)

But it may be said, "something did happen. A storm broke, or meteor of unusual brilliancy fell." But how did this storm frame articulate voice and carry on a conversation in Hebrew? and how can the meteoric light have given visions to Paul and Ananias simultaneously, and in such wise that each was led to a course of action fitting in with that of the other, and exactly corresponding, and how could the thunder and the meteoric light combined have both struck Paul blind and have given to Ananias the power of restoring his sight suddenly and effectually? Moreover, the fact of Paul's conversion and the miracle of Ananias were but parts in a long series of wonderful events. Could imagination thus excited shew to Paul the vision of Jesus Christ many times? Could a power of marvel-working, thus originated, have enabled Paul to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum (that is to say in Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Syria, the Lesser Asia, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, in Greece, and away to the confines of Northern Italy), "with mighty signs and wonders wrought by the power of the Spirit of God, to make the Gentiles obedient to his preaching" (Acts ix 17, 18, xxii. 13, 17, 18, xi, xxi, xxii, and xxiii, and Rom xv 18, 19) "Surely such a series of miraculous acts, all consequential to and dependent on the first revelation, puts the truth of that revelation beyond the possibility of doubt or deceit." The supposition

is that Paul was an enthusiastic madman, but "if the difficulties which have been shewn to have obstructed that work which he did were such as the ablest impostor could not overcome, how much more insurmountable were they to a madman?" Indeed, however difficult it may be to account for the conversion and Apostleship of Paul on the supposition that he was an impostor, it is a harder task to give an account of things on the assumption that he was a mad enthusiast. His "madness" in its unreasoning, honest blundering did things too wonderful. His fellow travellers, Ananias at Damascus, Sergius Paulus the prudent deputy at Paphos, Elymas the soicerer, Eutychus at Troas, the priests and people at Lystia, the jailor at Philippi, the barbarian Maltese, Erastus the city treasurer at Corinth, and Dionysius the learned Areopagite at Athens, must have all been equally mad, and mad with marvellous uniformity, mad too with a madness which gave feet to the lame, eyes to the blind, healing to the sick, freedom to non-bound captives, and life to the dead, mad with a madness which subdued to the faith of Christ men and women of many nations of various religions, of every kind of intellectual and educational degree, and of all ranks of society. Men here and there however still ascribe to imagination that which Paul ascribes to the power of God, not perceiving that "they ascribe to imagination the same omnipotency which he ascribes to God."

One other enquiry remains. Was Paul the victim of others' deceit, and can all he said and did be referred to the power of that deceit?

"But I," to quote the words of Lord Lyttleton, "need say little to show the absurdity of this supposition. It was morally impossible for the disciples of Christ to conceive such a thought as that of turning His persecutor into His Apostle, and to do this by a fraud in the very instant of his greatest fury against them and then Lord. But could they have been so extravagant as to conceive such a thought, it was physically impossible for them to execute it in the manner we.

find his conversion to have been effected Could they produce a light in the air which at mid-day was brighter than that of the sun? Could they make Saul hear words from out of that light which were not heard by the rest of the company? Could they make him blind for three days after that vision? and then make scales fall from off his eyes, and restore him to his sight by a word? Beyond dispute no fraud could do these things, but much less still could the fraud of others produce those miracles subsequent to his conversion, in which he was not passive but active, which he did himself and appeals to in his epistles as a proof of his Divine mission I shall then take it for granted that he was not deceived by the frauds of others, and that what he said of himself cannot be imputed to the power of that deceit, no more than to wilful imposture or to enthusiasm, and then it follows that what he related to have been the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen, THEREFORE THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS A DIVINE REVELATION"

To the mind of the Christian believer the conclusion is absolute but even in the case of the sincere but sceptical enquirer, it ought to carry so much at least of force and probability as will make him very cautious and watchful before he rejects it, and will lead him to give a truly humble and kindly attention to the exhortation of Paul, which in all love and brotherly kindness, I adopt as my own, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved"

ONE GOD AND ONE MEDIATOR.

BUT why a Mediator? Unbelievers in Divine revelation have often asked the question, why, if a God exists, can we not commune directly with him, or why cannot His influence be immediately felt upon the human soul, and if both of these, or either of them, be possible, why a Mediator should be required to stand between God and man. We reply, that God does influence man by His Holy Spirit, and that we do commune directly with Him in prayer, and yet a Mediator is essential, no less to the intellectual side of our nature than to our religious life. Has it ever struck you to observe the somewhat paradoxical position that we are placed in with regard to the Infinite? You cannot escape it, and yet it is impossible to comprehend it. Something must have been from all eternity—that is an axiom which no one would ever think of disputing. Whether that something which has existed from all eternity be matter or God is not now the question. I could easily show were this the occasion to do so, that it cannot be matter, because every part of the material universe is conditioned and limited, and therefore finite.* But something must have always been, or nought had still been. And that which is eternal is infinite,—in duration, at all events. Now let any person try if he can conceive of an eternal existence which had no beginning and can have no end. Bring this truth into the region of the intellect, and there attempt to deal with it, and what will be the result? Why, you will find that not simply the understanding, but even the imagination, will be paralysed in the process. So something must be extended to infinity in regard to space. There can be no end, for that would imply that something was limiting what was thought of, and as that something would extend further, the thought would have to be transferred to it, and so on *ad infinitum*, which

* *Vide* Essay on the Folly of Atheism by the writer

is in fact, the very infinity in question Professor Max Muller has well said, "Man sees—he sees to a certain point, and there his eyesight breaks down But exactly where his eyesight breaks down, there presses upon him, whether he likes it or not, the perception of the unlimited or the infinite" * The most self-evident truth, therefore, which forces itself into our minds, and which it is impossible for us to escape, is that something exists which is extended to infinity But we may try all we know to form a clear conception of this something, and although we had intellectual faculties a thousand times greater than those of Plato, or Newton, or Kant, or all combined, we should fail—utterly fail The finite cannot comprehend the infinite, yet believe in it, it must, by the very necessity of the laws of existence What, then, is the inference to be drawn from this fact? Let us see If the one infinite Being be God, as it most assuredly is, the application of this truth is important in the extreme Sir Isaac Newton, speaking of Deity, says, "He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite He is not duration and space, but has duration of existence, and is present, by existing always and everywhere, He constitutes duration and space, eternity and infinity Since every part of space and every individual moment of duration is everywhere certainty, the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be said to be in no time and in no space. He is omnipresent, not by His power only, but in His very substance, for power cannot subsist without substance God is not at all affected by the motions of bodies, neither do they find any resistance from His Omnipresence He necessarily exists, and by the same necessity He exists always and everywhere Whence also it follows that He is all similar—all eye—all ear—all brain—all aim—all sensation—all understanding—all active power, but this, not in a human or corporeal, but in a manner wholly unknown to us." † It will be seen, therefore, that unless some special revelation of God

*Contemporary Review, vol. xxi, p. 227

† Principles

be made to man, all human beings must remain in utter ignorance of His nature, and the only worship possible will be that which St Paul discovered at Athens offered at the shrine of "The Unknown God," a worship which modern sceptical thought is doing much to revive.

But humanity sustains some sort of relationship to God, and owes some kind of allegiance to Him. It is essential, therefore, for our well-being—nay, for our very purpose in life—that we should learn what this is. For unless we can do so, we are groping our way in the dark, and must be like so many vessels at sea tossed about by a tempestuous storm, and destitute alike of chart, compass, and rudder.

In addition to the defects of the intellect which separate us from God, there is another and a yet more serious one. Man has fallen, and by his sins and his vices has alienated himself further from the Holy One. There is consequently, a great yawning chasm between us all and the Heavenly Father, which, when we look into, we are awe-stricken and terrified. No mortal being can budge that gulf, and unless something, therefore, be done to aid us, we must remain for ever separated from Him who gave us birth, sustains us every moment, and can alone satisfy the deep, heartfelt wants of our spiritual nature.

It is a startling fact that all nations have either sought for a mediator, or degraded their deities down to a level which they could approach. And this course they found necessary in order to bring their worship within the sphere of their understanding. It seems to have been a recognised truth in all the great religions that Deity in his Divine Essence cannot be known, and that therefore some inferior being must stand between Him and the worshipper. In Brahmanism, Para-Brahm, the supreme God, is not worshipped, all devotions are paid to three inferior deities, named Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu. In Buddhism, no worship is offered to the infinite Nivana, nor to the mighty Adi-Buddha, but to the inferior Buddhas, and to Sakya-Muni, the founder of the religion, and simply a man. In the religion of Zoroaster, Zerana-Aker is so far removed

from everything finite, that no worshipper approaches him. The objects of devotion here are two smaller and antagonistic deities, called *Omuzd* and *Ahiman*. One of these presides over all that is good, and the other over everything that is evil, and they are equally powerful, and always in conflict. With the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, and the Scandinavians, the supreme deity was simply *primus inter pares*—the first among equals. This was the part played by Zeus, Jupiter, and Odin, neither of whom had infinite powers ascribed to him. The want of a mediator seems always to have been felt where the Infinite was believed in. Religions outside of the influence of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures appear to have generally "vibrated between a personal God, the object of worship who was limited and finite, and an infinite, absolute Being who was out of sight, whose veil no one had lifted. The peculiarity of the Mosiac religion was to make God truly the One alone, and at the same time truly the object of worship" *. And Christ came as the incarnation of God to make Deity known to man, and to open up a way to the Infinite.

In the Old Testament, all the manifestations of God were made through a chosen medium or mediator. And the ancient Jewish Church recognised a Divine person under the name of *Myma*—a term having the same meaning as the *Logos*, or Word, of the New Testament. The Eternal and Infinite God could never be seen by mortal eyes. "No man," says our Lord, "hath seen God at any time." Yet in the Old Testament Scriptures there are numerous instances given of the visible appearance of Jehovah. Is this contradictory? By no means. God in His Divine Essence cannot be seen, "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," † but the *Myma*, or Word, was seen and heard and spoken with on many occasions. Modern Jews do not believe in this Divine *Myma*, but herein they show to what

* Ten Great Religions, by J. Freeman Clarke, p. 502

† John i. 18,

an extent they have departed from the primitive and pure faith of their fathers. Then ancient commentators, or Targumists, as they are called, are clear and explicit enough upon the subject. The Chaldee paraphrases abound with references to this great and mighty person. From them we learn that it was the *Mimra*, or Word, that always appeared under the name of the Angel of the Lord, and they, as well as the Scriptures, ascribe to this Being Divine honours, and call Him by the sacred, awful, and incommunicable name of Jehovah. Hundreds of passages could be quoted from the Targums to prove this, if I had the space. Suffice it to say that it was the Word, or *Mimra*, who spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden, who appeared to Abraham in the door of his tent, who led Israel in the pillar of a cloud, who shut the door of the ark on Noah, who wrought miracles through Moses, who destroyed Sodom, who punished Israel for making the golden calf, who made man after His own image, and by whom, in fact, the world was created. What a marvellous uniformity we see between the teaching of the ancient Jews and the New Testament, although now Judaism has become so terribly corrupted. The Jerusalem Targum says that God created the world by His Wisdom—that is, the Logos, for so Philo, also a Jew, explains it. And Paul, speaking of Christ, says, “by whom also He made the worlds.”

The doctrine of a Mediator, it will be seen, was taught in the Old Testament and recognised by the ancient Jewish Church, but of course received its full development under the New Testament dispensation. With Christ came in the full clear light of Gospel day, and what had previously been but dimly seen now became bright as the noonday sun. The glory of heaven shone upon the earth, and its golden beams illumined all meaner things.

“The hour that saw from opening heaven
 Redeeming glory stream,
 Beyond the summer hues of even,
 Beyond the midday beam,

Thenceforth to eyes of high desire
 The merriest things below,
 As with a seraph's robe of fire
 Invested, burn and glow "

Having seen the necessity for a mediator between God and men, the question that arises is as to the character of the mediator required. Modern Theists tell us that we can see enough of God in His works to learn to worship and adore Him. 'His glory,' say they, 'shines out resplendently in suns and stars, and trees and flowers, and rolling waters and grassy meads. The thunder and lightning, the earthquake and the tornado, all proclaim His power, whilst His wisdom is seen in every plant that grows and every animal that moves, from the huge elephant and the colossal whale, down to the ephemeral insect buzzing on the wing, and the simplest infusorial animacule in a drop of water.' All this is true, but we want to know more of God than these can tell us. The physical universe will not serve the purpose of a mediator between God and men, for many reasons. In the first place, we do not see it as it is, for the shadow of man's sin is thrown upon all on which he gazes. We see in nature just what we bring to nature the capacity for seeing. Everything appears to us according to our states of mind. No one of us sees things as they are beheld by another. The poet and the painter revel in some grand piece of scenery, feeling their souls stirred to the utmost depths, whilst a commonplace man of a low and grovelling mind fails to detect either grandeur or beauty. We all see nature through the darkness of our sinful state, and fail to catch the glory and the beauty that would otherwise appear.

Secondly, material nature does not come near enough to man to mediate between him and God. Whatever occupies the position of a mediator must be capable of being loved, for that which cannot receive love, and give out love, cannot transmit love. You can only love that which is capable of loving you in return, and trees and flowers, and suns and stars, are not capable of doing this. None of the things in the physical universe can, consequently, become the vehicle through

which Divine love can flow down to man. The mediator must be sought elsewhere than in external nature.

Can a man mediate? Alas, no. He cannot mediate for himself, much less for others. The chasm between God and man is an infinite one, and that chasm must be spanned by him who would act the part of a mediator. Let a human being be as pure as an angel, and gigantic in intellect as an archangel, he cannot bridge that tremendous and awful gulf. The mightiest and loftiest created being that God has made, the bright spirit who stands nearest to the throne of the Almighty, is incompetent to the task. He who takes upon himself the office of mediator must stand on the level of both the opposing parties. The word translated mediator in the text is *μεσιτης*, literally, one who stands between — a go-between, an umpire, a stakeholder, an interpreter, a peace-maker. The Divine peace-maker must stand on my level on one side, and on the other must reach up to the Infinite. He must share my nature, and yet must be divine, in a word, he must be God and man. No one else can perform the task, no one else can bridge the chasm between the infinite and the finite.

Hold up thy mirror to the sun,
And thou shalt need an angel's gaze,
So perfectly the polished stone
Gives back the glory of his rays
Turn it, and it shall paint as true
The soft green of the vernal earth,
And each small flower of bashful hue,
That closest hides its lowly birth
Our mirror is a blessed book,
Whence out from each illumined page
We see one glorious image look,
All eyes to dazzle and engage,—
'The Son of God' and that indeed
We see Him as He is, we know,
Since in the same bright glass we read
'The very life of things below' *

Next as to the Mediator provided by Christianity
"There is one God and one Mediator between God and

men—the man Christ Jesus” Thus, it will be seen, that it is humanity after all that mediates,—but it is the humanity of God. It is not every man, but the man Christ Jesus,—the man who is God’s fellow, the man whose nature opens both ways—to God on one side, and to the lowest of us on the human plane on the other. “It is not,” says an American divine* recently passed away from earth, “some tall angel talking to us from a distance, out of the porches of heaven, but some one clothed in our nature, touching the earth in its lowest place of evil and darkness, and at the same time touching the inmost heaven where all the divine scenery lay upon his soul,—not sinful humanity that cuts off the light rather than transmits it, but one supremely perfect, through whose translucency the whole Divine nature is imaged forth.” “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?” Glorious and heavenly words are these, coming to man like water to a thirsty soul, or food to one who is perishing of hunger.

Jesus Christ is not one of many mediators, but the one Mediator. He stands alone. Even sceptics have admitted that His character was *unique*, and unique it most unquestionably was. He was the typical man of the race, all the virtues of all the ages were gathered up and centred in Him. It was necessary that the Mediator should be a man sympathising with men through an experimental knowledge of human nature. To this end the Lord of life and glory stooped from heaven to earth, left His throne above, where angels and archangels bowed before Him and acknowledged His Divine power, to take up His abode with sinful, fallen, and disobedient man. “He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham”† Passing by all the hierarchy of heaven, from the highest created spirit down to the lowest of the angelic host, He came to man, and Himself became man, in order to open up a way from humanity to God. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took

* Dr H E Sears

† Heb ii 16

part of the same"—His Divinity became enshined in flesh, and we beheld His glory, and saw as much of God as human sight could endure

The Son of God in glory beams,
Too bright for eyes to scan,
But we can face the light that gleams
From the mild Son of Man "

Too much importance cannot be attached to the fact that the Mediator was a man—although more than man. Whatever reverence or awe we may experience when we contemplate the Divine side of the Lord's nature, that side which is described as "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person,"†—and reverence and awe we must feel when we fix our eyes upon this fountain of life and light,—we should never forget that the Mediator was human as well as Divine, that He had a nature like our own, that all that belongs to man—sin only excepted—was found in Him, that His griefs and sorrows, joys and gladnesses, pains and pleasures, were all such as we meet with in humanity at large. He knows our wants and our weaknesses, our struggles with sin, our conflicts with the devil, our strong passions, strangely blended with loving sympathies and aspirations after good. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"‡. Flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, there beats in His Divine breast a great human heart, full of human sympathy, joined with Divine love.

"He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same "

The Mediator was the man Christ Jesus, and by that manhood is humanity raised up to God, and God brought down to earth. We see God, not as a cold, impassive Being reposing upon the icy peaks of eternity, and moving a huge mechanism of worlds by some stern unbending process, and still less as an unconscious Force, or an imaginary "stream of tendency," but we

~ Heb 11 14

† Heb 1 2

‡ Heb 11 15

behold him as a loving Parent, whose Divine compassion extends to all that His hands have made, and is moved at every pulse of woe in His universe. In that incarnation humanity became Divine, and with the Divine humanity came Divine sorrows, Divine griefs, and Divine sympathies, which run down to every soul of man, and share in our smallest sufferings. The one Peacemaker is sufficient for us in all the ills and trials of life. Our very helplessness brings Him nearer to us. Our efforts after good, and our struggles with evil, even when unsuccessful, He does not disregard, and our keenest afflictions He makes His own.

What could we ever have known of God but for the Mediator provided by Him? Science might have told us of a great force issuing out from some centre, and developing worlds and men by a wild and purposeless process of Evolution, leaving us like straws on the surface of a troubled lake, or foam on the waves of a stormy sea, drifted hither and thither, with no plan and no power of a self-direction. Philosophy might have informed us that there was somewhere an infinite and eternal Being, but that He must ever remain enshrouded in mystery so great that any attempt to know Him was more futile than the effort of an insect to understand the integral calculus, and any conception that we might form of Him wild as a madman's dream. But the incarnation brought God within the sphere of human cognition, declared to us what was our relationship to Him, pointed out how deeply and tenderly He loved us, and opened up the road by which we can make our way to His presence, to dwell with Him for ever. God is no longer an unknown quantity to be discussed by sages, talked of in mystic jargon by philosophers, pooh-poohed by men who arrogantly style themselves thinkers, and relegated to the region of the unknowable by scientists. He is an infinite person, full of infinite love, whose character is infinite holiness, and whose goodness knows no bound. He is our Father, and we are His children. Human beings are not poor orphans tossed by chance into the great vortex of nature, to be dashed about

for a time, and then destroyed without pity, but hens to an immortality whose blessedness is higher than thought can conceive of or imagination depict "There is one God" that is a truth incomparably great, but far more important and more glorious to us is what follows,—“and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”

“One name above all glorious names,
With its ten thousand tongues,
The everlasting sea proclaims,
Echoing angelic songs”

“The man Christ Jesus” The entire fulness of that name will never be thoroughly unfolded through all the ages of eternity. It is the embodiment of all we know of God’s boundless love, everlasting mercy, and matchless grace. It shines brighter than the stars, and glows more gloriously than the sun. Angels prostrate themselves before it, and to it every knee shall bow. The man Christ Jesus has a name above every name. He is called “Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” He sits on the throne of the universe, but withal that, let us never forget that He was the man Christ Jesus, for herein lies the scheme of redemption and of mediation. He is the Alpha and Omega, who was, and is, and is to come, but still it was as man that He appeared in our midst, bringing the glories of heaven to earth, and raising up man to heaven. “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” All praise and dominion to Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever —AMEN

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

WE buy a copy of the Bible and begin to read it carefully, and soon we find that it was written by men of like passions with ourselves. This is seen on every page of it. Moses, David, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Matthew, Luke, Peter, Paul and John were not only men, but men differing very greatly from one another, with mental capacities ranging from those of very ordinary men to those of men of great genius. They were also men greatly differing in education and culture, ranging from comparative illiterateness to that of the greatest learning of their time and the highest development of the human faculties of that or any other time. All this is seen by any attentive consecutive reader of the Scriptures.

The varied character, style, and scope of the writings very unmistakably display the varied individualities, characters and attainments, as well as the varied purposes and circumstances of the authors. When it is therefore affirmed that the Bible is inspired, it is not by any means denied that it has been written by men, or that it is human. For it is most thoroughly human. The Scriptures themselves frequently assert this, and Christians have never tried to deny or to explain away the fact.

It is never said, for example, as it is said of the Vedas, that the Christian Scriptures came out of the mouth of God at the creation or before it, or at any subsequent time, or that they are the breath of God, or that they are eternal and one with God. Nor are they said, as it is said of the Koran, to have been written in heaven and brought to earth by human beings. Neither are they believed to have any supernatural magical influence in themselves, so that the mere touching of the letters or the listening to the sound of the words in the original or in translation

should have in themselves any supernatural effect for good or for evil on those who touch or on those who hear them. The Hebrew and Greek languages in which they were originally written are not believed to be divinely given or divinely created languages any more than English, Tamil, Marathi, Hindi or Bengali. The languages are human.

So also are the words and sentences, the grammar in accordance with which these are built up, and the rules of interpretation, in accordance with which the meaning is to be discovered. The similes, metaphors and other tropes, and figures of speech, grammar and rhetoric are all human, and to be understood, just as they would be if met with in any other human composition.

Let it be further observed that no claim is made to omniscience on the part of the writers, as is made, for example, in behalf of the Buddha and of some of his followers, by his biographers and others. The Bible writers were, some in a larger degree and some in a smaller degree ignorant, as all men are. Their wisdom was not perfect, their knowledge was limited, they were erring men. Many of them, nay all of them, had undoubtedly made many mistakes during their brief lives. They could not see the end from the beginning, and from not doing so they sometimes fell in the course of their earthly pilgrimage into mistakes, some small, some great, some significant, some very serious. Nay more, they were not sinless men. Some of them were guilty of most grievous sins, of immorality, for example, as well as of unbelief. When it is said that the Scriptures are inspired of God, it is never understood by intelligent Christians that the writers of them had been during all their lives, or indeed during any large portion of their lives, inspired, and still less sinless. The word inspiration is used as seen from our title primarily and chiefly, if not exclusively in regard to the writings, and not to the men, or if of the men necessarily only during the time when they were engaged in penning

those portions of Scriptures that came from their hand

Instead, therefore, of the acknowledgments, confessions and charges of sin that abound in the Bible, even with reference among others to the very writers themselves, making against its inspiration, it is justly contended that such really make for the divine origin of the Bible, inasmuch as they are in proof of the fundamental doctrine of the Bible that all men are sinners. Besides, such passages in honestly and faithfully acknowledging their authors' sins as in the case of David, Moses, and others, and the sins of the nation and people of Israel, go far towards proving their own divinity.

Of the Bible we say two things and care must be taken not to confound these two. We say in the *first* place that it contains truth from God supernaturally revealed or given to man, for man's guidance in religion and morals. In other words, it contains a divine revelation.

In the *second* place, it is said that the Bible contains that truth supernaturally transferred to human language, so that the whole of the Bible, being "inspired of God, is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." In other words, the Bible not only contains a Revelation, but it is itself throughout from beginning to end, inspired of God, so that it may be truly called, as no other book can—"God's word," or described as "written of God."

It is also very desirable that it should be clearly understood that the Bible says nothing as to *how*, that is, the mode or manner, in which the revelation was given, or in which the words came to be inspired—beyond the fact that it was given by the Spirit of God through the instrumentality of men chosen by the Spirit for that very purpose. And as the Bible says nothing on the point, so neither do the Articles of belief, the Confessions of Faith, or the Catechisms of the

Church in its various branches To attempt therefore to explain what God has left unexplained would be to attempt to be wise beyond what is written

These three thoughts are, it will be seen, quite distinct, viz (1) The fact that God has supernaturally informed man concerning spiritual things, which by his own unaided efforts he could have never learned as the undoubted truth of God, (2) that not only does the Bible contain such truth, but that the whole of it is God's word or is inspired by God, and (3) that the mode or manner of inspiration is not explained or revealed

Instinct or intuition would never have told us many of these truths, nor would it tell us that the Bible is inspired God had, for our instruction and comfort, to tell us both As a man sick of fever or cholera, or dying of snake-bite, is unable of himself or by his own intuition or instinct to say what is the medicine that is specially fitted to restore him to health, so a man whose moral and spiritual nature is diseased, cannot, of himself, say what is the cure or medicine God has provided, nor indeed does he know whether any has been provided for his relief or restoration The knowledge has to come from outside himself

It is not denied however that spiritual knowledge is given otherwise or elsewhere than in the Bible On the contrary it is admitted that in regard to many spiritual truths God has revealed Himself and His will concerning man in other ways and in other places The Apostle Paul writes of the Gentiles who have not the Bible being "a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts [or reasonings] one with another accusing or else excusing them"

Not only may something of God's character and God's will be discovered by man from the promptings of his own heart and the dictates of his own conscience, but "the invisible things of God, since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived by the

things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity, that men may be without excuse because that knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and fourfooted beasts and creeping things." That is, in other words, the existence, power, wisdom, goodness and righteousness of God, may unmistakably be known from His works, and thus man's duty to love, honour, worship and obey God, may also be known from His works, but in spite of it all man goes continually astray from the right path, falls short of the love, honour, worship and obedience which are due to God, and knows nothing clearly as to what the consequences may be, beyond the fact that punishment may be expected, or whether these consequences may be averted, and the very tendency to sin may be cured, and if so how. Of all this neither conscience nor nature tells anything definitely, or authoritatively. Hence the necessity of a revelation in addition to that supplied by nature, or in other words by conscience and the other works of God, and also the necessity that that revelation be also inspired, if we are to be certified that it is conveyed correctly to our hearts.

Of course, it is quite possible for God to give to any individual for his special benefit a revelation which would convey to him, even without any part of it being written, as much evidence that it came from God as to thoroughly satisfy him and to make it to him authoritative, but how such a revelation was to be for the race or for all succeeding time without its being written down with authority, and indeed inspired, we cannot well see. In this connection we would distinguish between *illumination* and *inspiration*. The former may also be spoken of as *spiritual enlightenment*. A man who has, as a special

mark of grace, received for his own spiritual benefit such a revelation as we have above spoken of, or one who has been specially and supernaturally enlightened in connection with his reading and meditation on the common Scriptures, we say has been illumined from on high, or has received spiritual enlightenment from the Spirit of God. He is in the Spirit or the Spirit dwelleth in him. Some such enlightenment is experienced, we believe, by most believers, and we would not say but even some, who would not be technically called believers, and even some who never saw or indeed heard of God's written word, may have had such an illumination. The minds of Plato and Socrates and such like men may have been supernaturally illumined by God's Spirit for anything that may be said to the contrary, but there is no evidence that the writings of the one or the conversations of the other were inspired in the sense in which theologians use the term. Shakespeare, Milton, Kalidasa, and Valmiki may be regarded as inspired or illumined, but then inspiration, using the word as it is frequently used in common literature, differs not only in degree but in kind from that which we predicate of the Bible. All gracious souls possess more or less of spiritual enlightenment or illumination, and all men of genius may be said in the loose way in which the term is used to be inspired. But neither the one nor the other class are necessarily inspired in the sense in which the Bible is inspired.

Upon all those who turn at God's reproof God has promised to pour out His Spirit and to make known His words unto them (Prov. 1. 23). To all those that awake from their spiritual sleep and arise from their spiritual death, Christ shall give light (Eph. v. 14). "If any man willeth to do God's will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God" or not. All this is spiritual enlightenment or illumination, but not inspiration, as we understand the latter term. This illumination has to do with *understanding* or knowing of God's will whether written or not. The

inspiration we speak of has to do with the *writing* of it, whether it be understood or not. This distinction may be clearly seen from the words of 1 Peter 1:10, where it is said —“Concerning which salvation, the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them.” Thus what then inspiration enabled them to record, then enlightenment or illumination was unable fully to understand. More especially should the inspiration of the writer be clearly distinguished from the illumination of the reader of the word. The latter is a faculty or capacity of a subjective nature belonging to the man, the former is an objective quality of the word or the writing caused by an objective influence.

As to the mode or manner of this inspiration, this much must be noticed that it is nowhere in the Bible said to be *dictation*. When one writer carefully reads what another has published, and remembers what another person has spoken, and he sits down and writes in his own language what of their thought he has been able to assimilate and make his own, we do not say that he has been dictated to by them, but that he has been inspired or influenced by them. His own character and individuality appear in what is thus produced. He is not a machine in the hands of the others. Yet their influence may be easily traced. They are to him sources of influence or inspiration. This influence may be strong or weak. In some places as strong as would appear on the supposition that he had been dictated to, even as regards the words. In other cases the influence may be so weak, that it can hardly be traced, yet the original writer may be so satisfied with the production even on the latter supposition, as to be able to sign the whole as if written by himself. This, we believe may be often illustrated in the case of Resolutions, Proclamations, &c, written by Secretaries

of State after a talk with the Governor or Sovereign, and afterwards signed and published in the name of the latter. The writers of the Bible were not dictated to, but they have been so influenced or inspired by the Spirit of God, that the writing is truly the Word of God. And as the result of this influence or inspiration it partakes of God's attribute of infallibility in its teaching of religious and moral truth. It is, as it were, winnowed completely of error in its moral and religious inculcation. This does not by any means convey the idea that everything in the Bible is absolutely true. When it is said for example in the words of Satan, "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. iv. 9), we are not asked to believe that Satan would have done all this. And when it is said that Job cursed the day of his birth, we do not understand that it was right in Job to do this, or that when Peter dissembled in speech and conduct that he was right in doing it.

The Spirit did not dictate the words and sentences to the writers so that they were mere writing machines or amanuenses, or clerks or copyists. No, their own intelligences, memories, judgments, moral faculties, all that was good in them were employed or used in the work in which they were engaged, so much so, as we have already seen, that the writings bear the full impress of their character, yet without any alloy, or adulterate moral or religious element, being thus introduced. An individual, a family, a society, a state and a nation and race, who read, learn and inwardly digest the Bible will feel nothing but moral and religious health as the result. For there is nothing that is morally or religiously unhealthy in it. It is characterised by a perfect moral and religious 'winnowedness,' in spite of all the moral and religious imperfection of the human sieves through which it passed.

Thus, for example, one cannot find from the beginning to the end of the Bible one single solitary syllable in favour of oppression. The poor and the weak are respected and protected in the Old as well as in the

New Testament The rights of the working man are honored as well as those of kings and conquerors, yet much of the Bible has been written by kings, generals and governors. There never was a code or body of laws that contained more humanity, in the best and fullest sense of the term, than that of Moses. The whole Bible is a thunderbolt of denunciation against all that is morally wrong. There is not a word from beginning to end that favors lust or the oppression of the weaker sex, but much that utterly condemns every appearance of such.

Now all this 'winnowedness' is startling. It is not human. But it is due to the fact that the Bible is inspired of God. In all other religious Scriptures there are mixtures of what is good and what is bad morally considered. One could cull moral and religious truths of the greatest beauty from Greek and Roman, Hindu and Buddhist, Muhammadan and Mormon Scriptures, but from the same volumes you could also cull moral instruction of the most questionable character,—even from books that profess to have been eternally given by God, or to have been, in the highest heaven, dictated by God. While in the sixty-six pamphlets written in different ages, all of them comparatively uncivilized, and some of them actually barbarous, by different men, all of whom were sinful and some of them grossly so, no teaching of a questionable morality, or any dogma of an immoral tendency can be discovered, and yet the writings were neither dictated by God, nor sent down from heaven after having been written by the finger of God. This, it is believed, cannot be said with equal truthfulness of any other writings in the world, simply because none other have been inspired by God in the sense in which the Bible has been.

It is also to be borne in mind that though inspiration has to do with the written language, yet it does not in any way interfere with or change the natural character of the language of the writers selected and influenced by the Spirit of God. Their language before they were so selected and inspired may have

been elegant or commonplace, dignified or mean, strictly grammatical or ungrammatical. Such it will remain after they have become inspired. Some people make the literary beauties of their Scriptures, the highly finished and polished character of the language used, or its poetical, philosophical or dignified nature a proof of its inspiration, as if there was any probability that God's selection of men was founded on their literary capacity and taste. We cannot see that either of these had or should have anything whatever to do with such a selection. What was the object and end of inspiration? Was it not to convey to men of all classes of society, in fact to the whole world, learned and ignorant, wise and foolish, highly imaginative and dully prosaic, those moral and spiritual truths that are for the saving of men's souls from sin and all its due consequences and to lead them up to God? This could be best done, not certainly by the employment of mere litterateurs, but by the using of men of different degrees of culture and refinement from different walks of society who would write each in such a style, as would, taken together be most likely to influence for good the world at large or society as a whole. Hence it is that we find the most important truths and instruction conveyed through different minds—as for example the life of Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God yet also *the* Son of man, formally described to us by four different biographies, not to speak of the side lights thrown upon His character by Paul, Peter, James and Jude. The four biographers tell their story very differently, and sometimes the same incident, never in a contradictory manner, but each as he himself felt it, just as a poet, a historian and a moralist might describe the very same battle, of which all three were witnesses, harmonizing in the main points, but each colouring his account with the hue of his own mind—and yet all three quite correct and all loyal to truth. In this way, not only do separate classes of persons obtain that special instruction which they specially need—but all are able to obtain a fuller realization of

the true meaning They see both sides of the shield, and both representations are inspired of God

In these respects the Bible differs very largely from the *Shastras* of India, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, Parsee or Sikh, New Dispensationist or Aryan, and differs to the advantage of the Christian and to that of the great mass of the people not only of India but of the whole world

This does not mean, however, that all portions of the Bible will be equally instructive and equally intelligible to all Some portions are fitted, as they were no doubt intended, for children and child-like adults, other portions for men of the profoundest intellects Some parts are so shallow that lambs may sport in them, and others so deep that elephants might be drowned in them Some minds have no taste for poetry, they have no patience with the most elevating writings of their own or any other time Books which have stirred the best thoughts and awakened the deepest feelings of other men are utterly distasteful to them In the Bible the tastes of both are consulted There the simplest historical and biographical prose is found side by side with the highly imaginative, profoundly philosophical, and to many minds most unintelligible mystical effusions of bards and prophets Yet all alike conspiring towards the glorifying of God and the edifying of man; because all alike are inspired

So also in regard to *Translations* it is asked are the Translations of the Bible inspired? Are they the word of God? Can they be said to have been written by God? Of course they can so far as they are *faithful* translations Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was originally written in English It is now translated into all the leading vernaculars of India Are these translations not Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*? Are not these Indian books Bunyan's work? Is he not the *author* of them all? Is the authorship lost in the process of translation? Certainly not, and in every return sent in to Government from all the

presses where these have been printed Bunyan's name has been put down in the column ruled for the author's name. God has not churlishly printed on His book, as some authors do,—“The right of Translation reserved” Most certainly not. He not only permits translations, but encourages such. His command to all is—“Search the Scriptures” And this, as far as the great bulk of the human race is concerned, can be done only by means of translations into the various languages understood by the people. Originally written in the Greek and Hebrew languages spoken by the Jews and others to whom it was first sent, it is the duty of all those who are engaged in the dissemination of its truth and the promulgation of its glad tidings to see to it that it is to the people among whom they labour accessible in a language which they can understand. And it is the duty of such to see to it also that the translations are as true and faithful to the original as it is possible to make them. And if the first is not so, as most likely it is not, it is then duty to revise and yet revise again, and thus every revision, so far as it approaches nearer and nearer to the conveying of the exact thought of the original partakes more and more of the attribute of inspiration which belongs to it.

But what, we are asked, about the *various readings* in the original itself, as brought out very clearly, for example, in the late English revision? In the process of transmitting the various books of which the Bible consists from the ancient past when printing was unknown down to modern times, God has instituted no perpetual miracle to guard it from the inevitable effects of the carelessness and frailties of human copyists. Hence these various readings. And the consequence is that in some instances, *comparatively few and unimportant* it should be always remembered, men are unable to say with absolute certainty what were the original words or what was the truth inculcated. There is here however nothing to militate against the inspiration of the original Scriptures,

or against that of all the rest of the Scriptures. It only effects these phrases or sentences, very few in number and in themselves very unimportant, in regard to which it is impossible to say which is the inspired reading. But so it is also in regard to the revelation God has given us in conscience and in nature. There are some cases in which it is impossible to say what conscience would have us do, and some others in which it is impossible to say what nature would have us learn from her. God is sparing of miracles. Man is wisely left to the exercise of his own free-will, and of his own moral judgment as a discipline that is both useful to him and glorifying to his Maker. But it is comforting to know that no variety of reading in the slightest degree endangers any of the great and essential doctrines of salvation. The blurring of a word or of a phrase in our father's letter so as to make a sentence unintelligible does not justify us in throwing the letter away as if this proved it was neither genuine nor useful. For there is nothing in these varieties of readings to affect the genuineness, authenticity or divine authorship of the Bible, any more than similar varieties of readings affect the genuineness and human authorship of the Rig - Veda, the Mahabharata or the Ramayana, or a blot or a blur the authorship of a friend's letter.

Once more. What of those passages in regard to which the Apostle Peter says that they are "hard to be understood, and which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction?" Let us illustrate. Life has been compared in Hindu scriptures, from the time of the Rig-Veda downwards to the present day, to a voyage across an ocean of difficult navigation. To accomplish a voyage safely say from India to England we require not only a good seaworthy boat, but also a trustworthy chart. Fancy then that you see one of your fellow-passengers on his first voyage to England poring over the chart, say of the Red Sea, and puzzling himself over the hard and to him unintelligible words and signs marked upon it, and also more or less alarm-

ed on account of the narrow channels, shallow soundings, sunken rocks, and jutting promontories which are all indicated on the chart, and which have all to be safely passed in the course of the voyage. At last in his anxiety and impatience he cries,—“Pitch it overboard. It is worse than useless. It is positively alarming.” You answer him,—“The chart was made by one who knew the whole route, it has safely guided many in the past to their desired haven in spite of these things, it will guide us too, if we will only trust it and be guided by it, for in spite of these alarming difficulties the way by which we have to proceed is plain enough, whatever may be said of places off our route with which we have comparatively little to do. But let us see what kind of chart you would have given us?” After some time the man brings a chart and sailing directions of his own making, suggested to him, as he said, in regard to their details, either by his own instincts or intuitions or by other charts, as for example one of the route from False Point to Ceylon, and another of the route from Ceylon to Australia. Out of these he had eliminated all that was difficult and unintelligible, and retained what was common to them all—and which he contended must therefore be true. On looking into the sailing directions it was found that they ran in this style —“Keep in deep water and you will not run aground, never enter a narrow channel and you will have abundant room, never enter a cyclone or storm but always keep in fair weather and you will never be storm-tossed or sea-sick, keep far away from all shores, capes, rocks sunken or otherwise, and from other craft of all kinds and you will never be shipwrecked.” You open the chart and you find that it is made on the same principles. There are no narrow channels, no rocks, no shallow soundings, no threatening capes or promontories, all is plain sailing. The places in which these had been marked on the true chart were here perfect blanks. After inspecting it for a little, his fellow passengers looked into the man’s face and saw that he

was in downright earnest. Their faces at once saddened and they turned away muttering "poor man," and one or two of them pointed to their head, indicating that something was wrong with the man's brain.

No less are they objects of pity and compassion, who contend that in an exposition of the deep things of God and eternity and the invisible realities of the spiritual world, there should be nothing but what is plain and simple to the finite minds of sinful men. If the Bible had been of the character such men desiderate, one thing would be clear, and that is that it had not been inspired of God—the infinite and unsearchable One,—for it would have wanted one of the principle characteristics of all God's works, material and immaterial. But this also must be said that many of these difficulties, and seeming contradictions, being of man's own making or of his own fancyings, might be removed to many, if only they approached them in the right spirit, with a loving trust and confidence in the great Captain, the maker of the chart. A sympathetic approach towards any one goes far towards the removal of difficulties, seeming inconsistencies and discrepancies in a man's character or in his work. So it is in regard to God—a sympathetic loving trustful approach towards God would go far to remove difficulties and what some people call contradictions and discrepancies in God's character, works and word. There is nothing in all this to militate against God being the author of the Bible, but, on the other hand, much that fully accords with the idea.

After meeting these various objections and removing as we hope these difficulties and misapprehensions, it is time that we should state more definitely and positively what is understood by the statements that the Bible is inspired, that it is God's word, and that God is its Author. We may first of all illustrate what is meant by these phrases by the analogous statement that the world and all that it contains, the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms are the work of God,

an inspired revelation of God, God's workmanship, and that God is then author—statements that are undoubtedly true. For not only is God the author of all, but all with more or less clearness teach "the invisible things of God," even "His everlasting power and divinity" (Rom. 1:20). But when it is further said that the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork," we are not to understand that every portion of the three kingdoms or every celestial body is equally instructive or suggestive of spiritual truth. But we do mean to say that all are equally the work of God. He made them all and all of them wholly. Nay, some individual member or limb of an animal or plant may have in the course of time been so mutilated or so injured that its individual teaching is blurred if not altogether blotted out. But to the reverent student of nature the teaching of the whole is not less full or less instructive because of these mutilated or injured portions. So in the same way the whole of the Bible is the word of God and every part of it. Still there may be passages so blurred by copyists or translators, or originally so dark or hard to be understood, or seemingly inconsistent with other passages, as to be comparatively unintelligible. But all this does not interfere with the teaching of the Bible as a whole, or with the teaching of those portions which are clear and easily understood, or with the positive statement that the whole is inspired of God.

As in the vegetable kingdom there are trees and branches, which having served their purpose, are now comparatively useless, and buds and twigs whose usefulness are yet in the future, so there may be in the Bible, for all we know to the contrary, phrases and sentences that have proved most instructive to past generations, and others whose chief usefulness may be in the future. Just as there are passages most useful to the highly civilized and others most useful to the comparatively simple and illiterate, though to the truly humble and docile there is nothing but may

prove more or less instructive, as all comes from his great loving Father in Heaven

Nay, we may go still further and say that as in nature there are objects created by God whose usefulness is altogether unknown and whom some incredulous minds would extirpate altogether, simply because of their ignorance as to their use, so there may be passages which the same class of minds would have removed altogether out of the Bible. But the Bible is still the word of God, just as nature is still the work of God in spite of such opinions as regards portions of it

Various theories have been held in regard to the nature of inspiration and the full extent and consequence of the influence which was exercised on the minds of the writers, or, in other words, as to the full effect of such influence on the Scriptures themselves. But we cannot say that we care much for theories or even definitions of so mystical and profound a thing as this, so long as the *divine authorship* of the Bible is accepted. The only inspiration worth contending for is the fact that God has secured, we care not how, that He Himself is so represented, and the truth, moral and spiritual, by which He is to regenerate man, as that it is really and truly God's representation of it, and is thus, as regards the whole of it, profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for discipline or instruction in righteousness.

But has this taken place? Is the Bible God's word? Is it inspired of God? We believe that it is, and that the fact is quite capable of proof. Just as any fact of science, or of history may be proved, so also may this fact of history. This is not the place, however, to produce and array in order the evidence in detail, but it may be desirable, even here, very briefly to state its nature or the mode of process of proof.

And first the authenticity and genuineness of the Scriptures have to be proved in the usual way in which this is done in regard to any secular book. They

have to be traced back century by century to the latter half of the first or beginning of the second century of the Christian Era, when they were written. Their trustworthiness as historical documents is to be established just as is done in regard to any other book, such as Cæsar's History of the Gallic wars, or Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian war. The writers of the Bible must be shown to be truthful and honest men who had opportunities of knowing what they wrote, and were not likely, from interested or other motives to tell what they knew to be untrue. No suspicion must lie on their truthfulness arising from their character, their conduct or their teaching. All this being established, as we believe it can easily be done, we are in a position to receive evidence on the question before us, as to the fact of their writings being inspired.

From the nature of the case the first evidence is that of the writers themselves. They and they alone were in the first place cognisant directly of the fact whether God did or did not endow them with this supernatural gift of inspiration. But being witnesses qualified by direct and full knowledge and intelligence, and of unquestioned veracity, their evidence would necessarily be, so far as it went, fully satisfactory. The fact itself was a secret between God and the individual writer, until either of them divulged it. Even should others have been present, it is not likely that their evidence would have been of much value, as nothing would have been seen or heard, or otherwise cognisable by the senses, to prove to a third person the fact of inspiration.

Now, as a matter of fact, the writers themselves claim inspiration as that which had taken place within their knowledge. They assert that they were under the influence of the Spirit of God—that—"they spake as they were *moved*," that is, as they were, "inspired" "by the Holy Ghost." Still oftener they write in such a manner as to show that this is taken unmistakably for granted, though not expressly asserted, and they

also write in such a way as to make it quite clear that their inspiration is an accepted fact with those Christians to whom they wrote

With regard to some of them this claim is supported not only by the character of their teaching, but also by the supernatural or miraculous works they were enabled to perform. They could say in the words attributed to Buddha—"Can a man guilty of lying perform such an act as this?" But what is better, they could say with their own Great Master—"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John x 67—39). Thus could many of those whose writings are embodied in the Bible, speak concerning themselves and the wonderful works which the Spirit enabled them to do. And it was an argument that went home with power to their contemporaries. And that it is an argument which has been felt with power by other people is seen from what we have quoted from the life of Buddha. The doing of such acts presupposes communication with the Almighty, for they are distinguishable not only from acts done through sleight-of-hand or special knowledge of the real or supposed occult powers of nature, but also from such as the Evil one can be supposed to enable his votaries to perform. And many of these writers of the Bible stand out before the eyes of their contemporaries as in this manner in communication with the Almighty. Their veracity is thus supported not only by their character and conduct and teaching, but also by the miraculous works which they performed from time to time.

Further, as independent witnesses we have the evidence of others who were similarly inspired by God. Thus the New Testament writers and the Christ Himself testify directly or indirectly to the inspiration of the Old Testament. Peter acknowledges, for example, the inspiration of Paul, as Paul does that of Isaiah, and so on. The single testimony of one inspired man

to his own inspiration does not stand alone or unsupported by that of others. God who alone was directly witness to the first man's inspiration testifies to the fact through the mouth of a second man, a third and a fourth man. And all of them, be it remembered, are equally and truly inspired of God.

Again, all these form as it were one unbroken continuous flood of supernatural influences, following the footsteps of God on the Earth from the time of man's falling away from God until the coming of Him in and by whom man was to be restored to God's family and favour. For, "although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, so as to leave men inexcusable, yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will which is necessary unto salvation, therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church, and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly into writing, which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased."

The Bible is, as it were, the God-inspired record of the steps taken by God with the view of revealing Himself, and of the provision which he has made in love for man's regeneration and salvation. And the several writings, studied chronologically, enable us to trace the development or evolution of this great scheme down the centuries until in the fulness of time the whole was accomplished. Thus the several writers stand not alone. They form part of a great system and in the evidence which goes to support and sustain every part of the system they all participate. Thus the inspiration of any one author does not rest on his own word alone, but upon that of many, all

speaking with God's authority, with 'one voice to one consistent truth, with increasing clearness and comprehensiveness, from its annunciation in Paradise, till its close in Patmos—as an external inspired word, but not its complete development, for that will go on with the ages as man's nature and specially his religious powers and faculties develop more and more

Thus the evidence is both human and divine—just as are the Scriptures themselves. It is an honest man's evidence to his own truthfulness—supported in many cases by the outward seal of God upon his commission. Then there is further the evidence of many such men, and each of these enjoying the testimony of God to the truthfulness of the fact asserted. That is God's evidence to the truthfulness of His own servants. "The authority of the Holy Scriptures for which it ought to be believed and obeyed dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof, and therefore it is to be received because it is the word of God."

God first of all made revelations to his poor weak sinful creatures here on earth. These revelations were from time to time conveyed to the written page. In this written page it is unmistakably stated in various ways and in numerous places, that the writers were inspired or that what they wrote was God's word. So the evidence of the inspiration is found in the books containing the revelation, which, as to their truthfulness, genuineness and authenticity, are otherwise fully testified to by their own proper evidence.

In addition to the evidence to which we have referred many people profess to find the proof of the inspiration of the Bible in the testimony which God's Spirit conveys to their hearts and consciences, while reading God's word. They profess to feel that the Scriptures have their certainty and proof of their being God's in themselves. To such minds they have so great a self-evidencing power that they ask for no other proof, so that they are left in no doubt as to their divine origin.

They ask for no supernatural or miraculous evidence—beyond the supernatural or miraculous power they exert on their own spiritual nature. This so thoroughly satisfies their hearts that they ask for none other.

It is however far from us to deny but there may be true Christians who have received the truth as it is revealed in God's word, without ever so much as to consider the question whether the Bible is inspired or not, but to all those who have fully studied the question and been satisfied, as they well may, with the evidence in support of its inspiration, that fact must be to them a source of comfort and strength in the midst of disquieting doubts, difficulties, and perplexities in regard to the eternal interests of their immortal souls.

To such it is a most comforting fact that the Lord Jesus, who was the truth, said in regard to the promises and rewards as well as to the judgments and threatenings of the Old Testament Scriptures—"I say unto you—Till heaven and earth pass away one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the 'law, till all things be accomplished." God has seen to it that every jot and tittle, that is the very smallest or minutest sign or letter of the law has been so written down that it is in accordance with His will, so that all shall be accomplished as it is there written. "For, how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea, or accomplishment of them all (2 Cor 1:20)

But if this fact be comforting and strength-giving to the trustful child of God, it should also be the lash or cord of love, according as one looks at it, to the disobedient and distrustful, driving him from his sin and drawing him to his God. For though the Bible is God's revelation of His love to His lost sinful creatures and of His proposed method of saving them (and there is no other method known to man), it is also God's revelation of his justice and holiness, and of his proposed method of dealing with the erring and disobedient. Reason alone cannot guide the sinner into safety or holiness, for it has no suffi-

cient data on which to found its conclusions Experience here is not to be trusted as regards the great and awful issues of eternity, for as yet the truths that bear upon the realities of eternity, are not facts in man's history, but propositions in his intellect His instincts and desires are not to be trusted For we must not reject a proposition simply because we do not like it All we do or can know in regard to the fate of the wicked, then state beyond death and the grave must come from God's revelation The future world is pre-eminently as far as reason, instinct and experience are concerned—

“The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns”

But God in His great mercy and in His intense earnestness that no one of His creatures be lost for ever, has revealed to us that country If then we would avoid mistakes, which all eternity cannot rectify, we must open our Bibles and see what God has there recorded For not only has He revealed the facts, but He has revealed them in language which though written by men is yet God's For these “men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost” “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard (and written), lest haply we drift away from them For if the words spoken through angels (God's messengers, human or otherwise), proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers and by gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His will” (Hebrews ii 1-4)

THE CLAIMS OF JESUS AS STATED BY HIMSELF.



THE extant words of Jesus are so characteristic and unique, that even professed sceptics and infidels find it easier to believe that He Himself spoke them, than to believe that His biographers invented them. On this point the words of John Stuart Mill are worthy of attention —“ Whatever else,” he observes, “ may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left, a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. The tradition of followers may have inserted all the miracles which he is reputed to have wrought. But who among his disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncracies were of a totally different sort, still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good that was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source.” *Essays on Religion*, p. 453.

There are some people who from the study of the words and works of Jesus have the highest regard for Him, but who have comparatively little esteem for Paul and the other disciples. They consequently set little value on what these may have said in regard to Jesus. They want to know only what Jesus Himself has said concerning Himself. The following pages are written

with this class of readers specially in view. My remarks on this subject I would distribute under three heads —

I What Christ said in regard to his state or condition before being born at Bethlehem of Judah

II What he said in regard to his state or condition on earth as the Son of Man

III What he said in regard to the state or condition in which he would be after death

Of these three states of existence, Jesus spoke in the one sentence — "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world again I leave the world, and go unto the Father" (John xvi 28)

I Of the first of these states, viz his pre-existence, I shall now speak, under three sub-divisions —

1 The fact of his pre-existence

2 His pre-existent relation to God the Father

3 His pre-existent relation to the universe, including humanity

It is well-known that we possess four different original sketches of the life of Jesus, written by his contemporaries, and giving the words and the deeds of the subject of their biographies. The first three of these are of the nature of summaries or synopses—hence they are spoken of as the Synoptists. The fourth is more of the nature of a supplement, containing additional matter, and especially the speeches or addresses of Jesus, in greater fulness. It may be as well, that we should give first the words and works as related by the Synoptists, and afterwards those of the fourth evangelist or biographer. But it should be remembered that, for various reasons, including their aim and object, as well as their character as mere writers of compendiums for the early Christians, there will not be found in their writings so much bearing directly on the first point as in the other. Still there are such passages as the following words of Jesus — "For to this end came I forth" (Mark i 38), "For, therefore, was I sent" (Luke iv 43), words which must refer to what he speaks of in the saying already quoted—"I am

come out from the Father and am come into the world" The same thought we find otherwise expressed thus—"Think not that I *came* to destroy the law and the prophets" (Matt v 17)—"Think not that I *came* to send peace on the earth I *came* not to send peace, but a sword For I *came* to set a man" &c (Mat x 34-35)—"I *came* not to call the righteous but sinners" (Mark ii 17)—"I *came* to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I, if it is already kindled" (Luke xii 49 see also v 51)—"The Son of Man *came* not to be ministered, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mat xx 28 and Mark x 45)—"The Son of Man *came* to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix) 10 "He that receiveth me receiveth Him [God] that *sent* me" (Matt x 40)—"I was not *sent* but unto the lost sheep" (Matt xv 24)—"Whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but Him that *sent* me" (Mark ix 37 and Luke ix 48) These passages imply *intention* on the part of Jesus *to come* for a special object, or rather for special objects Therefore he must have existed before he came That this is not to be taken figuratively is seen from the frequency and plainness with which he uses the words The latter set of passages which state that God *had sent* him to this world also imply that he existed before he was sent, more especially when we find elsewhere that Jesus states very fully and clearly the fact that he did exist ere he came to this world The words must be explained having regard to the usual style of thought and expression of Jesus

It is not necessary to quote passages in proof of the fact that Jesus claimed to be the *Christ* or *Messiah* promised in the Old Testament, and for whose coming the Jews were continually looking out,—the passages are so very numerous This being admitted, let us look at the following words of Jesus in reference to the Christ, addressed to the unbelieving Pharisees—"What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They say unto him, "The Son of David." He saith

unto them, "How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt, xxi 41-46) The same words will also be found in Mark xii 35-37 and Luke xx 41-44. If David in his day addressed him Lord, as he did in Psalm cxi, quoted by Jesus, as reported by all these three historians,—

"The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet,'—

then it is clear that he claimed to have been in existence at least in David's time, that is, upwards of a 1,050 years before the Christian era. In other words, the passage assumes the pre-existence of Jesus. It points to a superhuman or divine origin to the Christ, and Jesus claimed to be the Christ.

This claim throws light on the name by which he calls himself in some of the texts already quoted and others to which I will now refer. I mean the name "Son of Man." It was his favourite name for himself. No other person is so designated. Look, for example, at these words of Jesus—"The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt ix 6, Mark ii 10, Luke v 24). The expression "Son of Man," coupled with the phrase "upon earth," gives us an indirect contrast with him who was also the Son of God in heaven, more especially when it is associated, as it is in these three passages, with a power or authority to "forgive sins." The German Oosterzee justly remarks on the emphasis put by Jesus on the name "Son of Man," that "He who chooses this appellation for Himself implies that he is conscious of being originally more than man, and, inasmuch as he has come among men, of living in a condition of temporary humiliation."

Connected with the claim to be the Christ, and with his assumption of the name Son of Man, is the claim to be *the* Son of God, which is found alike in Matthew and in Luke, as advanced by Jesus on two different

occasions — first in presence of his own disciples, and afterwards in presence of the High Priest, in such words as, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son save the Father neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the son willeth to reveal him" (Matt xi 27) The words had made such an impression that we find them recorded also by Luke (x 22) Again, the High Priest said unto him—"I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" (Matt xxvi 63) Jesus saith unto him 'Thou hast said'—in other words "I am" Again—they all say unto him—"Art thou then the Son of God?" And he said unto them—"Ye say that I am," or as the words might be better rendered, 'Ye say it because I am' Schleiermacher rightly adds—"No Godhead can be more certain than that which so proclaims itself" But what I am just now concerned about is the proof these passages give, to the fact that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and the Son of Man, The Christ and consequently to his having had existence antecedent to his appearing as the Son of Man on earth at the beginning of the Christian era

For the full assertion of this fact, we turn from the Synoptists to the Fourth Gospel, in which the words of Jesus are given in greater fullness and with greater clearness As seen below, we find a persistent reiteration of the fact that he was sent by God.* These 28 passages must, on any sound principle of interpretation, mean much more than that he was born in this world, as we all are, with a certain mission, having certain duties to perform and a certain destiny before us There must be in them a reference to his pre-incarnate state, and to the fact that from that state he was sent by God to this earth with the commission which he proclaimed

*John iv 34 v 23 24 30 36, 37, vi 38 39 40 44 57 vii. 16 18 ix 4 x 36 xi 42 xii 44 45 49 xiv 24 xv 21, xvi 5, xvii. 3, 18 21 23 26 xx, 21

But he enters, as might be expected, into greater fullness of expression. Not only was he sent by the Father, but he came down from Heaven. "He had descended out of heaven" (iii 13) "I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (vi 38), "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven" (vi 51). *There*, he tells us, he had lived. "What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where he was before (vi 62) *There* he had seen the Father. "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he who is from God, he hath seen the Father" (vi 46), "I speak the things which I have seen with my Father" (viii 38). *There*, also, he had known the Father. "I know Him," said he, "because I am from Him, and He sent me" (vii 29). He describes himself as being "from above" in contrast with other men who were "from beneath." "Ye are," said he "from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world" (viii 23). To the same effect are his words—"If God were your Father, ye would love me for I came forth and am come from God, for neither have I come of myself, but He sent me" (viii 42) "I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. I know Him" (ix 28). In these passages he draws a contrast between them and himself—they were human in their origin, he was superhuman. The same contrast is seen in the object of his coming. They were in darkness, he came to give them light, they were lost, he came to find them. "For judgment," says he, "came I unto this world, that they who see not may see" (ix 39), "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness" (xi 46).

Still more emphatic as to his pre-existence is his declaration in the 8th chapter and the 58th verse, where he contrasts Abraham's *coming* into existence and his own possession of an *absolute* existence. "Your father Abraham," said he, "rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." The Jews therefore said unto

him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abiahham?" Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abiahham was born, I AM," The present tense "*I am*" is most expressive of his absolute being and of the backward glance of his then present consciousness upon his personal pre-existence.

Last of all, in this connection, we have the words uttered at the institution of the memorial supper, as recorded in the 16th and 17th chapters of this same Fourth Gospel — "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came out from the Father, and am come into the world" (xvi 27, 28). Then, engaging in prayer, he addresses God the Father in these solemn words — "And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Those whom thou hast given me, I will that where I am, they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (xvii, 5, 24). In these verses he asserts of himself (1) that he came out from God, (2) that he had been with the Father before the world was, and (3) that the Father had loved him before the foundations of the world were laid.

All these words, taken from each and all of the four biographies, make it quite clear that Jesus undoubtedly claimed to have lived ere he appeared in the flesh in Bethlehem of Judah. And this claim must not be confounded with the Hindu or Buddhist theories of transmigration of soul or of *kar ma*. There is not a trace of these theories to be met with anywhere in the Bible. No, Jesus' teaching is totally different from these, and is to the effect that he himself lived in heaven with God in glory, before not only Abiahham was, but before the laying of the foundations of the universe, and that thence God had sent him on an embassy of mercy to the children of men.

2 Let us now proceed to find out Jesus' teaching concerning his relation, in his pre-existent state, to

God, the Father. What does he himself say concerning this most mysterious relationship?

And, first of all, let it be borne in mind that the Jews have all along taught, as the leading doctrine revealed to them by God, the unity of the Godhead. And Jesus and his biographers had been born and brought up in that faith. Yea, more, in that faith they lived and died. Hence the necessity of indicating with more or less of fullness and clearness, the relation of Jesus the Christ, the Son of Man and the Son of God, to this one God. This is done by Jesus himself and his biographers, his disciples and apostles by the terms, (1) The Word, (2) The Son, (3) The Equal, and (4) The Sub-ordinate of God. Let us take up these four terms one after the other.

First, *the Word of God*. In regard to this term, it must be admitted that while the Apostle John uses it very largely in his writings concerning Jesus, more especially in the opening chapter of the Fourth Gospel, and connects the divinity of Jesus most intimately with the term, expressly saying that "the Word," which he identifies with Jesus, "is God," yet there are no expressions of Jesus himself quoted in which he applies the term to himself. But the fact underlying the term he asserts in the words quoted by Matthew—"Neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." These words claim for the Son the position of being the absolute and essential revealer of the Father—or, otherwise, "The Word of God" which "in the beginning was with God", or, as the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews describes him—the "Son whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds, who is the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance, and upholds all things by the word of his power."

(2) It is different as regards the phrase, "The Son of God," and similar terms. They are frequent, and express the essential though metaphysical relationship

which subsisted between the higher pre-existent nature of the Christ and that of God the Father. In proof of this, I adduce the following words of Christ himself. Take first His startling words uttered by him in the Temple while he was yet only twelve years of age. "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke ii 49). The next utterance we have, is in still more startling language, in the words already quoted, given by both Matthew and Luke. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him." Compare these words with those of his given in the Fourth Biography—"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father" (John x 15). Observe the emphasis put upon the *all things*—'*pan*' in the plural—the universe, as also the mutual and equal knowledge asserted, which pre-supposes a community of nature. "Father and Son know each other as they alone can who never were but face to face and heart to heart." In both cases "the knowledge is complete, absolute, perfect, in extent no less than in depth." Further it is sole and exclusive. No creature has or can have such knowledge. Jesus is the sole medium of this divine knowledge, and, from its very nature, it is not only divine, but eternal.

I have already referred to his claim to be David's Son and David's Lord (see above, p 93), a claim which refers his humanity to his being a descendant of David, but his divinity to his being the Son of God. According to the flesh he was a descendent of Israel's greatest and best king, but according to the Spirit he was a Being essentially higher than David himself, and a Being whom David had worshipped a thousand years before as his Lord. (See Matt xxii 42, Mark xii 35, Luke xx 41).

A text asserting the same ineffable relation to God be found in his answer to the Jewish High Priest's command—"Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God,"—words intended by the High Priest to convey the

deepest and highest meaning (See Matt xxiv 63, 64, Mark xiv 61, Luke xii 70) Jesus' answer, "Thou hast said," is held by all interpreters to have meant his affirming the truth of the proposition in which the command was expressed. The words were equivalent to his saying, 'Yes, I am the Christ, the Son of God.' They must also be interpreted in the light thrown upon them by the incident recorded in John v 18, when he had said that God was his Father, the people took up stones to stone him because he said "that God was his Father making himself equal with God." The High Priest understood the words as making the same claim, for we read that he rent his garments, exclaiming "He hath spoken blasphemy." The High Court of the Jews, the Sanhedrin, understood these words of Jesus as making the same high claim. Then judgment as officially reported to the Roman governor, was that "He had made himself the Son of God," an announcement which filled the governor with fear—"when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid" (John xix 7).

Again, his placing himself side by side with God in the matter of work, in the words, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" (John v 17) undoubtedly claims filial equality of essence with God, as God's Son, and was so understood by his Jewish hearers, and the whole succeeding context emphasises that meaning. He claimed that his activity was co-extensive with that of the Father, that "as the Son never worked without the Father, so the Father never worked without the Son, but always through him." This communion in activity with the Father he declared to have its fundamental basis in the fact that he, as Son, was the absolute object of the Father's love, to whom accordingly, the Father unbosomed his infinite heart and made known His eternal counsel, into whose hands the Father had committed all judgment, and that too with the express design that he, as Son, should, equally with the Father, become an object of honor to the universe. Nay, ascending to a loftier assumption, he avowed himself to be not alone the source of life to sinful and

dead men, but the absolute possessor in himself of that life which he imparted to others" (Read the whole passage—John v 17-26) An intelligent and honest interpretation demands that we should understand Christ's words as claiming for him that "in his essential, eternal, pre-existent nature, he stood towards God in the relation of a son to a Father"

Again, consider Jesus' words to the multitude on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (John vi 40)—"This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" Only a few verses before he had said that "he was the Bread of God which cometh down out of heaven," words which elicited the captious reply from the Jews—"Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth he now say, 'I am come down out of heaven?'" They undoubtedly believed that his words claimed a pre-mundane existence This interpretation of his words he endorsed in the question subsequently addressed to them (v 62)—"What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where he was before?" Hence the Sonship he claimed was a pre-mundane and essential sonship as distinguished from a mundane and an official sonship

Consider further, on this point, Jesus' words spoken in the Treasury at Jerusalem, in answer to the question—"Where is thy father?" When he said—"Ye know neither me nor my Father if ye knew me ye would know my Father also" (John viii 19) Jesus here claims to be so faithful an image or likeness of the uncreated supreme Being, that, to know the former was equivalent to knowing the latter, a claim which he afterwards repeated to one of his disciples at the Supper (xiv 9) It was at the same time, in the Treasury, that he claimed for himself a super-mundane origin, while theirs was mundane,—that they were mere servants temporarily in the Father's house, while he ever abode there, and that they would come to know him aright when they had

"lifted him up," in evident allusion to the death he was to die. The whole passage may be read with profit, as bearing on the claim which Jesus persistently set forth of there having been an essential, paternal and filial relationship between the Father and himself, such as exists not between God and any created being.

Another utterance of Jesus delivered at the Feast of Dedication, is to the same effect. "The works that I do in my Father's name they bear witness of me... Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him" (John x 25, 38). The whole passage is significant as to Christ's claim and the interpretation the Jews put upon it. He claimed to have a special right to his being accepted as the Son of the Father, from the Father having sanctified him, or set him apart for God's work, and sent him, as the revelation of Himself as no other person was or indeed could be set apart and sent. As we have already seen, the Sonship had reference both to working and to being.

Lastly, in this connection, I would draw attention to the words of his prayer at the Supper (John xvii 5)—"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was,"—words which unmistakably claim for Christ the relationship of a pre-existent sonship with the Father. In these words, he asserts, in terms as plain as could be desired, that he existed as a Personality distinct from the Father, *et c.*, as the Father's Son, before the foundations of the world were laid, and also that, in this pre-incarnate state, he was in the enjoyment of a glory very different from that he had on earth—a glory which could justify him in saying, as in v 10—"All things that are mine are thine"—a glory which was associated with the Infinite Father's unutterable love—and a glory that was compatible with the request—"Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." The whole prayer is founded upon a basis altogether different in essence from that on which any merely human prayer could rest—in fact on an equality or identity of essence with the Father.

(3) Proceeding with our argument we now come to consider the third term, *the equal* with God, or, in other words, Jesus' claim to equality with God in his pre-existent state. What I have already advanced will enable me to dispose of this very briefly. The words just adduced lead up to this, as, for example, the utterance recorded by Matthew (xi. 27) — "No man knoweth the Son save the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Equality in being and in power of knowing is here, if not predicated, certainly presupposed. They practically assert that only the infinite intelligence of the self-existent Jehovah could fathom the profundity of Jesus' being, while he himself possessed, and he alone possessed, the capacity of fathoming the divine nature. So, further, he claims in his own name and by his own power to perform works which from their nature must be always regarded as the prerogatives of the Divine Being, such as the giving of salvation and eternal life to the sinful children of men (Matt xi 28, Mark x. 30), forgiving their sins (Matt ix 6, Mark ii 10, Luke v 24), the controlling of the powers of nature and of the spirit world, and the raising of the dead.* The passages are so numerous in the Synoptists that I simply give the references to them in a footnote. In this connection I may also refer to the position which Jesus gives to himself in the formula of initiation into his Church, or, in other words in the sacrament of baptism. He, it will be observed, places his own name of "Son" in the middle between the Father and the Spirit (Matt xxviii 19). The position claims equality with the Deity himself—for no one will deny that both the terms, Father and Spirit, predicate Deity.

But the claim of equality is advanced by Jesus, if possible, in a still more obvious manner, as, for example,

* Matt viii 26, 27, Mark vi 39, Luke viii 24, 25, Matt xiii 28, Mark i 25, Luke iv 35, Matt ix 24, 25, Mark v 11, Luke vi 14

in the well-known utterance—"I and the Father are one," words which have no parallel in regard to any mere man. Christ never said to any of his disciples—"You and the Father are one," and no created being could without blasphemy say, "I and the Father are one." It will be observed from the context that they were uttered by Christ as proof that no one could pluck his sheep out of his hand. Hence, they must include in any case a unity of power with the almighty Father, and this must pre-suppose a unity of essence or nature. The use of the phrase *The Father* and not *My Father* is significant. The use of the verb in the first person plural (*we are one*) is also expressive. Christ never joins himself with other men thus. The Jews understood Christ's words as claiming a community or equality of nature with God in these words "We stone thee," they said, 'because thou being a man makest thyself God' (John x 33). Further, while Christ says that the union of believers with believers shall be an image of his oneness with the Father, he does not compare the union of believers with God with his union with God. The latter is unique. There is nothing in heaven or on earth comparable to it.

Then in addition to these words of Jesus, we find the following which demand the same basis, and go therefore to confirm the interpretation of the above—(1) "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (John xiv 10, xv 21) expressing the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, a thought compatible with pantheism (a theory utterly opposed to the whole current of Bible thought), but a thought which is incompatible with what is claimed to be *pure* as distinguished from *Christian* theism, (2) "As the Father knoweth me, even so do I know the Father" (John x. 15) which, as we have already seen, claims a knowledge of the Father commensurate with the Father's knowledge of him, and (3) "What things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner" (John v 19) a claim of co-ordinate rather than subordinate power and activity with the Father.

(4) Our fourth and last phrase was—“*The subordinate of God*” While claiming equality with God, it must not be forgotten that Jesus also asserted subordination to God. As no one is likely to call this in question I will not dwell at any length upon it. In the Triune Godhead, Son-ship comes always *after*, not *before*, Fatherhood. In this sense the Son is subordinate to the Father. Further the *sent* occupies a subordinate position to the sender. In this sense also the Son was subordinate to the Father, and lastly as the incarnate person in the Godhead Christ by humbling himself and taking the form of a servant, may be said to be subordinate to the Father. Utterances of Jesus might be quoted in which he asserts subordination in one or more of these senses. Hence we come across such sayings as—“All things are delivered unto me of my Father”, “He that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me”, “To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it is for them for whom it has been prepared of my Father”, “The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head”, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister”, “The Father is greater than I”, “I lay down my life for the sheep”, “If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet”

In the above we have found Jesus in his own recorded words claiming to be the Word and Manifestation of God, the Son of the Father, the Fellow and Equal of the Most High, the Servant and Subordinate of the Supreme, and I might have added, the Co-equal and the Sender of the Holy Ghost. I now proceed to the second part of my paper.

II *What Jesus said in regard to his state or condition on earth in his incarnate self-abasement*—Here we shall find that he who claimed to have subsisted in the form of God, and was God, now claimed to manifest himself as a man, having come forth from the Father and taken into indissoluble union with himself a perfect human nature, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—

"a true body and a reasonable soul" His favourite name 'Son of Man,' while hinting at his absolute divinity formally claimed a perfect normal humanity for himself. He uses this name in his recorded utterances about fifty times in all. He was the Ideal Man—the standard to attain which all men should aspire. While the expression most likely looks back to the Old Testament texts, Gen iii 15, Psalm, viii 4-6 and Daniel, vii 13, 14, (which see) it must also be understood as referring to 'our Lord's participation in human nature in a manner which, while genuine and true, was yet unique and exceptional, was, in fact, possible to him alone of all the sons of men." He was the True Man, the normal representative of the human race.

In confirmation of this view it may be noticed that Jesus himself again and again claims sinlessness or perfection as one of the characteristics of his humanity and also sets himself forward as a pattern or model to be followed. Consider for example the standard of morality he teaches—inward purity of heart, as well as external obedience of life, supreme love to God, as well as a love to all men (including our enemies) equalling our self-love, forgiveness of injuries, sympathy with all suffering, self-denial and consideration for others, and his claim to be always doing those things which were pleasing to the Father (John viii 29) and his deliberate challenge to his countrymen to convince him of the slightest moral defalcation (v. 46)—"Which of you convicteth me of sin?"

As to the *end or purpose* Christ had in view in becoming incarnate, we have the following explanations given by himself

1. First, to give to perishing men a revelation concerning God. Here are his words "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt xi 27). "Whom ye know not. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and he hath sent me" (John viii 29). "Ye have not known Him, but I know Him" (viii 55), "Every

one that hath heard from the Father and hath learned cometh unto me Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he who is from God, he hath seen the Father " (vi 45-6) "I speak the things which I have seen with my Father" (viii 38) "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that Himself doeth" (v 20) "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things" (viii 28) "I spake not from myself but the Father who sent me, He hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak The things, therefore, which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak" (xii 49-50) "I know Him, for I am from Him, and He hath sent me" (vii 29) "The word that I say unto you, I speak not from myself, but the Father abideth in me doeth His works" (xiv 10) Hence he could say, and did say, to the Pharisees—"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (viii 19), and to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou—'Show us the Father' " (xiv 14) Hence also he could say to Pilate "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (xviii 37), more especially the truth concerning the Father as seen from vi 45, 46 The Father Himself he addresses in these remarkable words—"I manifested Thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world" (xvii 6) This manifestation of God he made by his words, his deeds, and by his own person

He had, however, *another object* in view in becoming incarnate He came to *make atonement* for sinful men by dying for them Dimly at first, but more plainly afterwards when his disciples were able to bear it, he announced this object There is a dim announcement in the words,—“The days will come when the bridegroom (*i e* himself) shall be taken from them (*i e* his disciples), and then shall they fast” (Matt ix 15, Mark ii 20, Luke v 35), as also in the words,—“As Jonah was three days and three

nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt xii 39, 40, Luke xi 30, Matt xvi 4) More plainly, the announcement is made in Matt xvi 21, where we read, — "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and the third day be raised up" (see also Mark viii. 31) In Luke ix 22, we have his very words given,—"The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and the third day be raised up" As we are led to expect from the previous passage, we find that the same intimation is repeated on subsequent occasions, but with greater fullness, the mode of his death by crucifixion being definitely stated See Matt xvii 22, 23, Mark x 31, Luke ix 44, Matt xx 18, 19, Mark x 33, 34, Luke xviii 31, 33 On the following occasion he clearly intimates that this death was to be of a substitutionary character "The son of Man," said he, "came to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt xx 28, Mark x 45) These words unmistakably teach that Christ's surrendering of life was a ransom for the lives of many who were not in a position to pay a ransom themselves In the institution of the Supper he spoke similar words,—"This is *my blood of the covenant* which is shed *for many unto remission of sins*" (Matt xxvi 28, Mark xxii 24) He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave to them saying, "This is *my body which is given for you*" (Luke xxii 19)* The Supper was intended by Jesus to be a commemoration of his death This death is described as having been undergone in behalf of many, to deliver them from sin, in accordance with the provisions of a covenant entered upon between Christ and the Father The passages in the Fourth Gospel, as might be expected from its

* The Fourth Gospel references are xiii 1, 33, xiv 2, 4, 12, 28, xv 26, 17, 7, 16, 28, xvii, 11, 17, 13 xviii 19

nature, are fuller and more numerous. The first, here also, are more figurative, as in ii 19, 22 and iii 14, 15, where his death is figured by the overturned temple and the lifted up serpent, the latter so lifted up for the healing of the wounded and the dying. Again, we find it figured in the words "Living Bread," broken and given for the life of the world (vi 50-58), yet again, as the "good shepherd" who had come to give his life for the sheep, that they might have life, and have it more abundantly (x 10, 11, 15, 17, 18). In this lengthy passage, he insists on three facts—(1) that the death was voluntary, (2) that it was substitutionary, *i e*, in the room of others, and (3) that it was the request of the Father. He refers to the effect of his death under the similitude of a grain of wheat which, "if it die, beareth much fruit" (xii 25), and a few verses below adds, having the same vicarious death in view, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself"—signifying what manner of death he should die. The vicarious nature of the death he was to die, he teaches in the words recorded by John—"As I have loved you, greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," "And for their sakes I consecrate (or devote to death) myself that they also may be sanctified in truth" (xv 13, xvii 19).

The sanctifying which he was to undergo was the sanctifying of the sacrifice or offering to death, and then sanctifying in truth was the cleansing from sin, and the dedicating of all their powers to the service of God.

The *third* object Christ had in view was the *exemplification of human holiness*. The setting up of an exemplar. This, we saw, was taught in the phrase "*Son of Man*." But directly as well as indirectly he taught the same. His oft-repeated call to follow him implies that he set himself as a perfect exemplar or pattern. This is implied in his summons to the weary and heavy-laden to come to him and take upon them his yoke and learn of him (Matt xi 29), in his commendation of his own lowly life (Matt xx. 28, John xiii 15, Mark x 45), in his claim of mastership over all (Matt xxiii. 10), in his

claim to be accepted as the light of the world (John viii 12, ix 5, xii 35, 36, 46), and in the emphasis which he put on keeping his commandments (xiv 21, xv 10)

A *Fourth* object which Christ had in view in becoming incarnate, and on which he dwells at great length, was the establishment of a spiritual kingdom upon earth, in which God's will would be done as perfectly as in heaven, the full accomplishment of which would require the procession of the ages, up to the close of time. With regard to this kingdom of grace and truth, the foundations of which were laid by Jesus eighteen hundred years ago, Bushnell asks—"Is this great idea, then, which no man ever before conceived, the raising of the whole human race to God, a plan sustained with such evenness of courage and a confidence of the world's future so far transcending any human example,—is this a human development? Regard the benevolence of it as a work readjusting the relations of God and his government with men, the cost of it, the length of time it will cover, and the far off date of its completion—is it on this scale that a Nazarene carpenter, a poor uneducated villager lays out his plans and graduates the confidence of his undertakings? There have been great enthusiasts in the world, and they have shown their infirmity by lunatic aims, appropriate to their extravagance. But it is not human, we may safely affirm, to lay out projects transcending all human ability, like this of Jesus, and which cannot be completed in many thousands of years, doing it in all the aims of sobriety, entering on the performance without parade, and yielding life to it finally as the inaugural of its triumph. No human creature sits quietly down to a perpetual project, one that proposes to be executed only at the end or final harvest of the world. That is not human but divine."

On the claims which Jesus advanced by, and in connection with, the display of his credentials—his miracles of power and wisdom—I will not dwell, as I have already at some length elsewhere treated of them

But I may be allowed to take the following somewhat lengthy summary from Dr Whitelaw's volume,* to which I am throughout this paper under great obligation

" *His astonishing pretensions* These have been so often under notice that in this place they demand only brief recapitulation. The Personage whose image is portrayed in the Gospels talks about Himself in a way that is perfectly consistent and intelligible on the foregoing assumption of an incarnation, but utterly inexplicable on the hypothesis of mere humanity. Not only does He claim to have come down from heaven (John vi 38,), and to have been sent forth upon a special embassy to the world (John iii 16), but he solemnly declares that He had pre-existed as the Son of God (John v 20) and the Equal of the Father (John x 30), and was even at the moment while He talked the Son of Man who was in heaven (John iii 13). Not only does He put Himself forward as the absolutely perfect exemplar of human virtue, saying, "I am the Light of the world he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John viii 12), and exempt Himself from all participation in the sins of men, exclaiming, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii 46), but He arrogates to Himself the right of dispensing pardon to the guilty, declaring that "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt ix 6). Representing Himself as possessed of life in Himself (John v 26), He declares Himself at the same time to be capable of giving life to whomsoever He may please (John v 21),, nay, He affirms that He had come to give His life "a ransom for many" (Matt x 28), and so to be "the bread of life" of which if a man ate he should never hunger more, nay, should never die, but should live for ever (John vi 35, 50, 51). Though confessing Himself at one time to be the Son of Man who had not where to lay His head (Matt viii 20), at another time He makes the astounding assertion "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt xi 27, xii 18). He even ventures to assert that He was such a being as only the Father could thoroughly understand, and as alone could thoroughly appreciate the Father (Matt xi 27, John x 15), that only in knowing, loving, and obeying Him could men find either true happiness on earth or final salvation in heaven (Matt xi 28, John x 24, xii 3), and that the future destinies of all men would be determined by the attitude they might assume towards Him (Matt x 32, xxi 31—46). In the most solemn and impressive manner He announces that though He may die He shall

**How is the Divinity of Jesus depicted in the Gospels and Epistles.* Hodder and Stoughton, 1883. Price 3s 6d pp 271

rise again (Matt xx 19, and re-ascend to the glory which He had before the world was (John vi 62), that there He shall continue to preside over the affairs of the universe till the end of time (Matt xviii 18—20), and that then He shall once more return to earth to raise the dead and judge all the inhabitants of the world "The Son of man shall come again in the glory of His Father and with His holy angels, and before Him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt xv 31) Now, it will be obvious that these extraordinary claims and unparalleled assumptions were neither extraordinary nor unparalleled except on the hypothesis that Christ was a mere man. If the consciousness of which these utterances were the self-witness was a purely human consciousness, then the psychological problem of explaining such a consciousness must remain for ever hopelessly insoluble. If Jesus of Nazareth, being an ordinary son of Adam, habitually spoke as is represented in the Gospels, it is certain He must have been either a madman or an impostor. But neither of these theories is tenable. It is true that on one occasion His Friends thought Him beside Himself (Mark iii 21), but this was rather an expression of kindly solicitude for His welfare than a deliberate impeachment of his sanity. The Scribes and Pharisees also more than once insinuated doubts of His mental integrity saying, "He hath a devil and is mad" (Matt ix 24, Mark iii 22, Luke xi 15, John vii 20, viii 48, 52, x 20), but such an allegation Christ expressly repudiated (John vii 49), and the people who were invited to believe it generally remained incredulous (John x 21), while it is doubtful if the propagators of the scandal were themselves persuaded of its truth. At all events, the attempt to explain Christ's sublime self-witness as the incoherent talk of a maniac is so remote from likelihood, betrays so palpable an incapacity to distinguish things that differ, that the author of such a suggestion would at once lay himself open to the charge that he desired to fix on Jesus. And even less conceivable is the idea that Christ, in so discoursing about Himself, as He is represented by the evangelists, was consciously uttering what He knew to be false, since in this case He must have been *the most astounding impostor* that the world has ever seen, having wilfully and wickedly attempted what never before or since entered into a human brain, to palm Himself off upon His contemporaries as the Son of God and Equal of the Supreme. Nay, it will follow that Jesus of Nazareth, the most consummate of charlatans, was also *the most successful of wonder workers*, inasmuch as, while putting forth the most astounding claim that ever creaturely intelligence conceived. He was able to maintain the imposition so consistently and persistently that He never faltered and never broke down, never contradicted Himself and never uttered incongruities or absurdities, but so perfectly preserved the impersonation He had assumed, that millions of the human

race have believed, and still believe, that He was God. And yet further will it result that Jesus, the Christ of the Gospels must have been *the greatest moral monstrosity* the world has ever beheld, since in Him the highest goodness and the deepest wickedness were met, since in His life and character there shone forth the reflection of pure holiness, while underneath, in the secret depths of His being there existed the absolute negation of all truth. And so, finally, will it be the case, on the hypothesis we are now considering, that Christianity and the Christian Church, with all its enlightening and purifying influences, must have proceeded from the genius of a liar and the success of an impostor. Assert it who may, that does not appear credible. There remains, therefore, only one more hypothesis possible, viz., that Christ's pretensions were exactly true, or, in other words, that He was precisely what He claimed to be—**THE SON OF GOD**."

Consider what depth of meaning and what extent of claim are embedded in the words, which, Jesus tells us, he will address, as King and judge, on the great day of judgment, to the whole human race, in the presence of the assembled universe. Turning first to those on his right hand he will say,—“Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was an hungry and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me, I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me.” Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, “Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee? Or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?” And the King shall answer and say unto them, “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.” In these words he identifies himself with the little ones of the race, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the prisoners and the strangers of the human family, so that whatever is done for them, is done for him, and, as we learn from what follows, what is not done for them he regards as not done for him—and judges accordingly. And the effect has been that Europe’s (or rather Christen-

doms) relation to these little ones, the poor, the needy, the sad and afflicted, the female, the child and the slave, has been completely changed during these nineteen hundred years. He, as it were, by one almighty divine act of sympathy projected his own personality into the sorrowing portion of the race so that he is they and they are he, or are to be so regarded by him and his followers in all ages.

I regard the "little ones" of Jesus' words as including all little children. That I am right will be seen from another passage (Mark ix 36-37), where we read that when Jesus had taken a child in his arms, he said unto the people—"Whoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me." Here we find the same identification, with the same effect all over the world. Wherever the power of Jesus' words is felt, and it is felt wherever he is known, there is no more infanticide or exposure of infants with frightful cruelties, such as at one time abounded in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Islands of the South Sea. Again what a stupendous projection of personality and assumption of claim in the utterances of Jesus—"I am the Truth," "I am the Life," "I am the Way, no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv 6).

In connection with this thought consider the use of the words "Verily" as in English, or "Amen" as in the original Greek. So characteristic was the use of it in the ears of his beloved disciple John, that in his Book of Revelation, he calls Jesus in all seriousness by this name. "These things saith *The Amen*." The double "Amen," or "Verily, Verily," occurs as the prelude to utterances of Jesus as often as twenty-five times in the Fourth Gospel alone, and the single "Verily" as often as thirty times in the First Gospel in similar circumstances. The prophets begin their sentences with a "Thus saith the Lord," and persons in authority with "Thus saith the king," or "Thus saith the Government," but Jesus of Nazareth with a "Verily, Verily, I say unto you." Experts after many years of special study may claim to speak with a

"Verily, Verily" But Jesus' "Verily" professes to be founded on no such study or experience. A living preacher has gathered the teaching of the phrase into these well expressed sentences

"First, it is a remarkable claim on the part of the Teacher to absolute authority. There is nothing more distinguishing and unique than the tone of supreme sovereign authority with which Christ always speaks, combined with the most perfect gentleness and the most utter meekness and humility. He flings his bare words down before us, and says—'There! take that, because I say it, and for no other reason.'

"And now I have one question which I want all of you to weigh. What business had Jesus Christ to talk in that fashion to me? Why should I take from his lips anything that he chooses to say to me? What right has he to assume the place thus of a Teacher who does not need to prove, and who does all that is required when he asserts? I know of only one answer, dear brethren, and it seems to me that unless we are prepared to accept him as standing in altogether a different relation to the truth which he utters from that which men stand in to the truths which are entrusted to them, we cannot vindicate the method of his teaching from the charge of arrogance and from a serious and fatal flaw. But if it be true that not only did he apprehend the truth but that he *was* the Truth, then we can understand how the self-manifestation of Christ is the loftiest vindication of the truth that he declares, nor deign to recommend his deepest and most mysterious utterances by any other word than this —'Verily, verily, I say unto you.'

"That which it is degradation to give to a man, it is blasphemy to withhold from Christ. The absolute certitude of his message has for its correlative our unwavering steadfastness"—
D. McLaren

A kindred characteristic of Christ's teaching, leading to the same conclusion, is found in its universality and illimitableness. He addresses all men every where and throughout all time. And he addresses the whole man. Other men address special classes or sections of the race, or certain periods of time. They address their intellects, their ambition or pride, concerning their outward conduct, their worship or religious ceremonies. Christ addresses man every where, alike concerning the world that now is and that which is to come, concerning their external conduct and ceremonious observances, but still more as of still greater impor-

tance then internal emotions, then hopes, fears, loves, passions, etc. He takes cognisance of all. And on all these and to all men he speaks with a divine authority, not like mere men. He knew men thoroughly. He knew what was in man. He knew his weaknesses as well as his trials. He knew also what were the demands of law. Yet he could say—"I do always those things that please the Father—which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii 29-43) "I have glorified thee (O Father) upon earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John xvii 4). And Jesus died as He lived without confession of sin for the good reason that he had no sins to confess. With his knowledge of holiness and sin on the one hand, and of man in his inmost parts and of all the demands of the law on the other, this implies a realization that he was more than man, yea nothing less than the God-man.

III I now come to consider in the third place, *what Jesus said in regard to the state or condition in which he would be after death*.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt vii, 22,) Jesus says to his audience in regard to some future day—the great Judgment day—"Many will say to me in that day 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'" Further on we read this utterance—"The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds" (xvi 27). As seen from a subsequent passage (xxiv 3) there were two comings of Christ which were often spoken of together, the language used being more or less applicable to both—the one referring to his metaphorical coming to judge and destroy Jerusalem, the other his coming at "the end of the world." Both implied a departure after death and a subsequent return.

Observe the use of the word "*glory*" in connection with his re-appearance upon earth, contrasting with his present state, as for example in his words — "Then shall all the tribes of the earth see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and *great glory*. And he shall send forth his angels," &c [Matt xxiv 30] "When the Son of man shall come *in his glory*, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of *his glory* and before him shall be gathered all the nations" [xxv 31] "The Son of Man cometh in *the glory of his Father* with the holy angels" [Mark viii 38] See also xiii 26, Luke ix 26, xxi 27. Jesus looked confidently to a future in which he would be reinvested with his pre-existent glory and when he would act as judge of the whole human race.

This confidence he, on one occasion, asserted before the High Priest. After claiming to be "the Christ, the Son of God," he added "I say unto you, henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt xxvii 64). The speech preceding the Supper, given at length in John's Gospel is full of references to this glory which he anticipated (xiii—xvii 24), but I cannot stop to point out the various texts.

The glory spoken of is intimately related to the position he claimed as Head of his Church, or king over his spiritual kingdom. In connection with this claim he uses such words as these to the members of the kingdom — "Yet a little while and the world beholdeth me no more, but ye behold me, because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me and I in you" (John xiv 19, 20). From these words it will be seen that the union spoken of would be with the glorified Christ. Its nature, reality and importance are illustrated by the union of the vine and its branches (John xv 1-7). In his prayer to the Father he again presses it—"that they all may be one. I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," (xvii 21-23). The same union is insisted on in the

utterances preserved by Matt (x 40, xii 48-50, xviii 5, xxv 40), It also underlies his words addressed to Saul on his way to Damascus. In obeying, suffering, dying for them, this union is presupposed, and it is illustrated by the "good shepherd" dying for his sheep, as also by his going to his Father's house to prepare mansions for them. In all his actions as King, in his relation to the kingdom, then welfare is ever in view (See Matt xiii 37, 41, xx. 28, Luke xxii 29, Matt xxv 31, 32, John xviii 36, 37, xii 32, xiii 13)

But Jesus claims to be not only King in his own glorious spiritual kingdom, but also sovereign Ruler of the universe. "All things," says he, "have been delivered unto me of my Father" (Matt xi 27, Luke x 22). In the Parable of the Pounds, he represents his subjects as saying—"We will not have this man to reign over us," and as ultimately suffering condign punishment for their refusal (Luke xix 14, 27). In Matt xxv 34, he represents himself as a King as well as Judge of all the nations, good and bad, and giving to all according to their deserts. In his great parting commission to his disciples he says "All power hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations." All these claims are totally inconsistent with the idea of Jesus being a mere man or a mere creature. They pre-suppose divinity.

In conclusion, I may here again refer to what has already been hinted at, that he claimed to be the Judge of all, of the living and the dead, the evil and the good. This he does in the sayings quoted by Matt (vii. 22, x 23, 33, xiii 30, 42, 43, xvi 27 cf Mark viii 38 and Luke ix. 26) see also Luke xii 35-48, xvii 22, 23, and Matt xxiv, xxv., with their parallels. In all these passages, the claim is stated at such length and with such fullness of details and with such clearness and lucidity of expression that it would be a work of supererogation on my part to quote any particular passage, and my space will not allow me to quote all. Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, the great Bengali reformer

accepted this claim without hesitation. No one having any respect for Christ's words can with any consistency reject it. And this one claim demands that he be regarded at the least as superhuman. The Rajah "readily admits this position," and also agrees "in esteeming the nature of this office as most important, and that nothing but the gift of supernatural wisdom can qualify a being to judge the conduct of thousands of millions of individuals, living at different times from the beginning of the world to the day of the Resurrection." But Christ, as we have seen, advanced distinct claims of being the Word or Revealer of God, the Eternal Son of the Father, the second Person of the ineffable Trinity, placing himself between the Father, and the Spirit. He further claimed to be the Lord of Angels, the light of the world and the Life of men, the Messiah of God and the Saviour of the lost. As man he claimed to be sinless, and as God to possess all power in heaven and in earth. In these circumstances there is nothing strange in his claim to be the Universal Judge. Yet there is no claim more emphatically advanced, by him, directly and indirectly than that of being meek and lowly, and there is no virtue on which he more insists than that of humility, or one that becomes him more thoroughly, or is more consistent with his life and character as a whole. In reading the frank, simple records of his life as they were left to his followers by his four original biographers, one is specially struck by his meekness, submissiveness, condescending love, and his humility. This is not only the chief but the one feature of his character which we are formally asked to imitate. On at least two separate, distinct occasions, he does this. Once when he calls out to the multitude "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." The second and only other occasion on which he formally sets himself forth as an example to his disciples is when, after washing their feet, he said—"Know ye

what I have done unto you ? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Now this claim of meekness, lowliness and humility, unmistakably advanced by Jesus, is consistently and reasonably founded only on the supposition that the other claims of superhuman or divine power, wisdom and holiness are also true. And it must be admitted that these claims, as regards both his humanity and his divinity, are the very claims set forth in his behalf by his followers in all ages—as expressly stated by the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and with his expression of them I conclude—"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize (a thing to be grasped), to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross. Wherefore God also highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father"—Phil ii 5—11

THE SELF-REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST

GOD'S revelation of himself in Christ as the Redeemer of men from sin and condemnation as recorded in the Bible is the distinctive and essential fact of Christianity and the centre of all distinctively Christian doctrine. I propose to consider in this paper what this revelation of God in redemption is, and thus to define Christianity by its distinctive and essential characteristics.

By Redemption I mean all which God does to deliver men from sin and condemnation and to bring him back to harmony with himself in the life of faith and love. It includes the whole action of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. It includes also God's action in human history preparing man for Christ's coming, it includes the descent of the Holy Spirit after his ascension, and the subsequent development of the kingdom of Christ under the dispensation of the Spirit till the close of the history of the human race in its natural life on earth, and it includes the final consummation of the kingdom beyond man's earthly life in the blessedness of heaven.

I God's action in redemption is historical.

That it is historical is involved in the idea of redemption, which is God's action on and within men, and therefore must be in the course of human history. It is God's action issuing in historical results, it influences men to turn from sin to God, renovates them to new spiritual life, establishes and perpetuates among them a kingdom of righteousness and good-will, transforms society into the kingdom of God. It reveals its progress in history by its effects, like a hidden brook, which by the livelier green betrays the secret of its winding course.

Christ is an historical personage. His life, teaching and work, his death and resurrection are accepted by Christians as historical facts. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. It is also the conception of Christianity that the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was an historical fact, that ever since then the Spirit of God has been acting on men and in the courses of human history building up the kingdom of Christ on earth, and will continue so to act until the final consummation of man's earthly history. Nor does the historical action of God in redemption begin with Christ's earthly life. The biblical representation is that when man first sinned he made no movement to return, and had no disposition to do so. Separated from God by his iniquity he loved the distance well. But God in his love would have him return to his favour. On the very day of his first sin God sought the sinner fleeing and hiding from his Maker, called him to himself, and while condemning his sin, received him again as a worshipper. This was the beginning of redemption. And the Old Testament goes on to relate that God continued to reveal himself among men as gracious to all who returned to him, he accepted their worship, declared to them his law, taught them by his prophets, he revealed himself to Israel as their covenant God, he perpetuated his kingdom and educated the people in the hope of the Messiah. Thus, the whole history recorded in the Old Testament looked forward to Christ.

Therefore, Christianity, being essentially redemption, is necessarily historical. It is the promised Christ of the Old Testament, the living, suffering, dying, risen Christ of the New Testament, the Christ reigning and life-giving in the dispensation of the Spirit. Christianity, therefore, is not primarily doctrine but history, not philosophy or ethics, but the historical manifestation of God in His love, redeeming man from sin. It is history in the past, life-giving energy in the present, promise for the future.

II God's action in redemption involves the miraculous. Rothe says "Miracles and prophecy are not adjuncts appended from without to a revelation in itself independent of them, but are constitutive elements of the revelation itself"

The possibility of miracles is involved in the idea of redemption. Redemption implies such presence and action of God in the universe, such access of God to man, such intimacy of man's communion with him, such close relations of the spiritual system to the natural, as make miracles possible and reasonable, as in fact make them, when rightly apprehended, to cease to be miracles in the sense often attached to them, and bring them into strict accord with the constitution and law of the universe.

Miracles, in their relation to redemption, may be distinguished as essential and incidental.

The acts which are essential and fundamental in redemption are miraculous. Such are the person and life of Christ, his resurrection and ascension, the whole history of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And the redemptive action of God in its preparatory stage recorded in the Old Testament involves the miraculous. In all that period God was related to his people by covenant, in which he promised his favor and blessing on condition of their trust in him and then fidelity to him in obedience to the law. We have the record of the making of this covenant with Abraham, and of its renewal at successive epochs in their history. They were instructed by his prophets, who communicated to them his commands, his warnings and his promises. It was by this covenant of God with them that Israel was distinguished from other peoples. Thus the history of redemption through this period of preparation for Christ's coming was marked by both miracle and prophecy.

The miraculous, therefore, belongs to the essence of redemption, and consequently to the essence of Christianity. The attempt to retain Christianity after eliminating the miraculous is futile. Such an elimina-

tion changes the conception of Christianity from historical redemption through Christ to speculative philosophy and ethics. The residuum of speculative and ethical doctrine, if it can be called a system of religious thought, is not Christianity, and those who hold it, however wise and good, at least are not Christians in any true significance of the name.

Besides those miracles which were constitutive and essential in redemption there are others which were incidental, as the miracles of healing.

Thomas Aquinas distinguishes the first class as miracles that are objects of our faith, the second as miracles which are for the confirmation of our faith. All the miracles of Christ and the Apostles were wrought in carrying on the work of redemption and founding and extending Christ's kingdom on the earth.

Miracles have a threefold significance. They are acts of redemption, either constitutive and essential, or incidental. They are signs or evidences, signs of the spiritual and supernatural penetrating the natural, of the presence of the kingdom of God on earth and of its agencies and influences energizing among men, of the riches of that kingdom opened in works of beneficence of the presence and power of God's redeeming grace empowering and authorising the worker of the miracle, and of the glory and coming exaltation of Christ and the prevalence of his kingdom. And, lastly, as wonders, they arrest attention, awaken the spiritual capacities, arouse the conscience, enforce instruction, and thus are auxiliary to the introduction of the Gospel into the unbelieving world.

III God's redemptive action centering in Christ constitutes a revelation. In Christ and in God's redemptive action centering in him as recorded in the Bible, God reveals himself as the Redeemer of men from sin. The redemptive action is the revelation.

It is a revelation of God himself by what he does, as distinguished from a revelation of ready-made doctrines and precept communicated in words.

It has been shown that a man cannot know any object merely by his own subjective activity. The object must first act in some way on him and so reveal itself, and then the mind reacts on the object perceiving and apprehending it. The same is true of God. Man cannot know God by dint of mere subjective thinking. There must be some action of God in which he comes out from the secrecy of his being and reveals himself. It is essential in the idea of revelation that it must be made primarily in what God does. Accordingly God's action in redemption constitutes his revelation of himself as redeemer. It is a revelation of himself made in actually redeeming men from condemnation and sin, not a revelation of truth communicated in words.

Here is a double contrast. The object revealed is not primarily formulated truth or doctrine or precept, it is not even religion, it is God himself, the Redeemer of men. And the revelation is made not primarily by the medium of words and sentences but by deeds. It is not an absent father writing to his children to instruct them as to the nature of the family and the grounds of filial duty and informing them what he would have them do. It is rather a father living among his children revealing himself in all which he does for and with them. God reveals himself in redemption as the sun reveals itself by shining to all that see its light and feel its heat. Very different would the revelation of the sun be by a message to men in total darkness, teaching them by words the scientific theory of light.

Accordingly the word in which God communicates his fullest revelation is the living word made flesh in Christ; God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The prophet Malachi, in Messianic vision, sees this revelation as the rising of the sun: "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." And

in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said of him, under the same likeness to the sun, that he is the effulgence or outshining of God's glory and the very image of his substance. But God reveals himself in Christ by what he is and does rather than by what he says. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins by declaring that God has revealed himself in his Son, and is occupied throughout the epistle expressly in explaining what the revelation is. But in the whole letter he does not quote a single saying of Christ, but unfolds the significance of the revelation made in what he is and does. The other epistles in the New Testament are full of Christ, they profess to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Yet in them all there is scarcely a quotation of any sentence which he uttered. Christ when on earth made himself the principal object of his own teaching. He proclaimed himself as the predicted Messiah, he explained the true nature of his kingdom and the character of those who should be admitted to it. But he said comparatively little of his death. How could he? His death was itself the revelation, it was itself the sacrifice of atonement. Necessarily he must let the fact reveal its significance. He did not come to preach redemption, but to redeem. He did not come to preach the gospel, but to give us a gospel to be preached, to do the great work of redemption which reveals God's grace to sinners, the glad tidings of which are the gospel. The significance of his revelation of God does not consist primarily in "the words of the Master," as rationalists like to express it, but in what he is and does, the Immanuel, the God with us.

God's action centering in Christ and redeeming man from sin is, both as to that which is revealed and the method of the revelation, peculiar to itself, distinct from all other revelations, and transcends them all.

The old distinction of natural and revealed religion and natural and revealed theology is no longer available. All religion and all knowledge of God imply some action of God revealing himself to men. In this

sense God reveals himself to all men. This Paul affirms in the first and second chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and in his speeches at Athens and at Lystia. This universal revelation has been already set forth. God reveals himself as the absolute Being in the necessary principles and laws of thought which underlie all scientific knowledge and make such knowledge possible. In the universe he reveals himself as its first Cause and as the Power that maintains it and acts in it. In the constitution and course of nature and in the constitution and history of man he reveals himself as the absolute Reason, the personal God. And in man's rational and moral constitution and freedom God reveals himself as the righteous moral Lawgiver and Judge, and reveals man to himself not only as a rational free agent, but also as a sinner against God in the transgression of his righteous law. Christianity then is not distinguished from the so-called natural religion and theology by the fact of revelation, but by the fact of an additional revelation peculiar to itself.

In the first place, it is distinguished by a peculiar line of historical action in which God reveals himself as the redeemer of men from sin. It is God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. From the beginning of history we trace a line of action in which God reveals himself as gracious to sinners. This action looks forward to Christ and culminates in him. From the God in Christ proceeds the divine Spirit. He illuminates the minds of men, darkened with sin, with the knowledge of God revealed in Christ as the Redeemer, he bears the influences and energies of God's redeeming grace through all the world and perpetuates them through the earthly history of mankind, thus he from age to age is gathering out of the world a community of the redeemed, a kingdom of Christ, a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, comprising all who, under the influence of God's grace, are willing to turn from sin, and to trust and serve God in a new and spiritual life.

In the second place, God's revelation of himself in Christ is distinguished by the peculiar matter of the revelation. He reveals himself as the Redeemer of men from sin. When man by sin has sundered the bonds of his union with God in filial trust and service, the questions arise, can he be received again to the favor of God and restored to his normal union with him, and if God can receive him, can the sinner be influenced of his own free will to return. To these questions no answer is given in the revelation of God in the constitution and course of nature, or in the constitution of man, or in his history aside from the history of redemption in Christ. The answer from these sources, if any, would rather seem to be that sin, as man's wilful rupturing of his normal union with God, as his setting up for himself in self-sufficiency and repudiation of his condition as a creature, as a contradicting of the universal reason and of fundamental constitution of the universe, must make it for ever impossible for man to regain his normal union with God and so to realize his true perfection and well-being. Plainly it is impossible unless God first by his own action in some way reveals himself gracious and accessible even to sinners. It is in Christ and only in him that he makes this revelation. In him he makes atonement for sin, and opens the way for the free return of every sinful man who will. In him he reveals himself gracious to sinners with open heart ready to receive them to his favor, when they return to him. And this is the Gospel of Christ, the glad tidings of great joy to all people. But this is not all. God not merely waits to be gracious to sinners when they return to him, but he puts forth positive influence to arouse and guide and draw to himself sinners having of themselves no disposition to come. While the minds of men are darkened with sin so that the light of the eternal wisdom and love are hidden, God in Christ, the eternal Reason which is the true light of every man, breaks through the darkening clouds and shines into their hearts to give the light of the know-

ledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ And while men are yet sinners, with their wills fixed in the renunciation of God, in their self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking and self-glorying, while their desires and affections are perverted, their spiritual susceptibilities benumbed, and their fleshly nature exalted above the spiritual, God in Christ comes to them by the Spirit with heavenly influences and energies to quicken them to spiritual life, and to supply divine guidance and grace to help in time of need to every one willing to return to the life of filial trust and loving service and so to regain the privilege and blessedness of the sons of God And here again is the gospel of Christ, the glad tidings to all

This historical action of God in Christ redeeming the world from sin is the revelation of God peculiar to Christianity and distinctive of it It is distinctive and peculiar both as to what it reveals and as to the historical action in which the revelation has been made It is therefore also distinguished from all other revelations by its superior fullness and completeness, by its adaptedness to all the spiritual needs of man and by its power of spiritual renovation It is God's revelation of himself in its highest and consummate form As Dr. Doane expresses it "The perfecting of the self-revelation of God is nothing other than the incarnation of God" This is the new revelation which breaks through the old circle of the natural life, to make us by a birth of the Spirit into new creatures in Christ and children of God And if so, then God's coming into humanity in Christ to redeem man from condemnation and sin and to set up his reign of righteousness and grace, is the central and fundamental fact in human history, to which all other revelations and religions are subordinated, on which all true theology must centre, and on which the true significance and philosophy of all other history must depend

IV. The Christian revelation includes both the historical or public and the prophetic or private Both are facts, and therefore both, in the broadest meaning

of the word, are historical. But the distinction may be designated by these words in the lack of any which are more exact. The historical or public revelations are redemptive acts open to common observation, as the life, works, death, and resurrection of Christ, and in the Old Testament the deliverance from Egypt and other divine interpositions in the history of Israel. The prophetic or private revelations are divine influences revealing God in the consciousness of an individual, so that he knows God in experience and is able to testify to others of what he has thus known of God. This is the essence of all prophecy. In this sense all Christians, as recipients of the witness of the Spirit and as thus themselves witnesses for God are prophets. The prophets of the Bible were subjects of a special divine influence and inspired to testify of what God had revealed to them. So Ewald represents it: "We must recognize in the prophets one of the most wonderful primal faculties of the soul, potentially existing through the whole human race, but revealed in especial strength, truth and persistence in the history of Israel only." "The spirit of every true prophet begins with beholding the divine light, and being absorbed into the mind and will of God."

Prophecy is a knowledge and declaration, not of future events only, but of God in any revelation of himself within the consciousness of an individual. In Israel the prophets not only foretold future events, but were revealers of the truth, character and will of God, and preachers of righteousness. They "negotiated between God and man." They stood for God, his law and covenant against all wickedness, warned the people of impending judgments on their sins, declared God's promises, and strove to keep them faithful to their covenant with him.

Prophecy sustains important relations to redemption. Prophetic revelation is a part of the divine action in redemption, either essential or incidental. The revelation of God in the consciousness of an individual through the influence of the Spirit convincing of sin,

renewing, illuminating and sanctifying, giving peace with God and inspiring with courage and hope, invigorating with divine energy in every good work, is essential in redeeming the person from sin and restoring him to his moral union and communion with God, so that he is filled with all the fulness of God. Promise of blessing, both to the individual and to the community of the redeemed, is inseparable from the revelation of God's grace in redemption. The preaching of the Gospel, the testifying of those in whom Christ is revealed, is essential in the idea of redemption as carried forward among men through the agency of Christians working together with God and finding therein their own education and development, in fellowship with God, into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In this sense prophecy is perpetual in the kingdom of Christ.

Prediction, also, by men specially inspired, is essential in the carrying forward of redemption. Such is the Messianic prophecy which pervades the prophecies of the Old Testament. It was the declaration by inspired men of the revelation, which they had received in divers portions and divers manners of the central idea and central fact of redemption. Other predictions of particular events, though they belong to the general course of redemptive action, are not essential but incidental. Thus the revelation of God in his redemptive action is both historical and prophetic and the latter is always subordinate to the former. So a great general reveals the plan of his campaign in actually carrying it through, and therein also reveals himself as a great military genius. But in the execution of his plan he must take subordinate commanders into his confidence, disclose to them some general idea of his plan, and from step to step its details in various parts and in various ways. And these private revelations are acts essential or incidental to the action of the campaign.

Prediction in its fulfilment has also evidential value. The fulfilment in Jesus Christ of the Messianic pro-

prophecy is evidence that in him God is redeeming the world. The history unfolds in agreement with the prophetic plan. The Old Testament contains the New as the bud contains the flower. In Christ the bud of prophecy opens into the flower of history. Redemption moves on in an atmosphere of promise, and prediction of greater things to come is but the vocalization of its vital breath. The fact that the spirit of promise and of prophecy pervades the Hebrew religion, unfolding into realization in Christianity and thence into larger promise, is evidence that this religion is from God. In the religions of Egypt, India, Persia, China, there is no prophecy and no promise. It is a characteristic of an ethnic religion that it assumes its own completeness, and is bound within its own limits. It admits no outlook to a future when it will burst its ceremonies, rise to a new life and transcend itself. And it has no consciousness of a destiny and vital power to renovate society and to quicken and guide its progress to a future always better than the past. Such development and progress are precluded by the essence of these religions. Pantheism, in making God everything, makes him nothing. It recognizes only an unconscious indeterminate forever evolving into the universe and resolving back into the infinite. The movement is not forward and progressive, but ever in a circle. There is no consciousness, no intelligence, no freedom, no love, no wisdom. The generations of men are but the indeterminate, the unconscious evolved, all on the same level, all abreast rather than in movement forward. God is chained by fate, man by caste. In such a system what Messianic hope can bud and blossom? What expectation and prophecy of a kingdom of God growing like the mustard-seed can spring up? But the very genius of the Hebrew religion was its outlook to the future. Its very life was in the expectation of a development into something transcending itself. It carried ever in its bosom the primal promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Thus the prophets unfolded

with ever increasing clearness and fulness, until the expectation of its fulfilment saturated the life of the people and became what has been called the Hebrew Utopia. But this Messianic expectation was realized in Christ, and from him the religion of promise and hope, of enthusiasm for humanity, of ever widening and deepening progress has been prevailing in the world. And this progress is accordant with the essence of the religion. Here is the personal God acting in consciousness and freedom. He is the eternal Reason, he is the almighty Power acting freely in external harmony with the Reason. Here are wisdom and love, here is God with men, gracious even to the sinful when they return to him, here is God redeeming men from sin. Here that which has been ceases to be the measure of that which shall be, the miracle of time will burst forth in the world and men are in the image of God, know him and can trust and serve him. Then a kingdom of God, a reign of righteousness and peace, appears on the earth, the old gives place to the better and more vigorous new, old institutions become effete and pass away, and in the face of all hindrances and delays, the believer in Christ believes that the ancient prophecy will surely be fulfilled, that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Prediction is also related to redemption as giving instruction and motive, as inspiring courage and enthusiasm and directing endeavor. The Christian works for the welfare of men in advancing the kingdom of Christ, in the inspiration of expected victory, he knows that it is a "kingdom which cannot be moved."

V It follows that God's revelation of himself is through human medium.

The reception of it must be through the medium of the susceptibilities and powers of a human soul. As a revelation of God it must be not only apprehended by the intellect, but accepted in the trustfulness of the heart. There must be a human medium and the mediation must be both intellectual and moral. All con-

ception of revelation poured into a man in a mechanical way without his personal and free participation in it as its intelligent and trustful recipient, is destructive of its essential significance as a revelation. Even if the revelation were after the manner of the Arabian Nights, and the future, the distant, the unknown were seen in a magic mirror, the seer must apprehend for himself what the mirror reveals, must interpret its significance in its practical relations to himself and to persons and interests within the circle of his previous knowledge. And this must be true of revelation however made. If it is historical and public the observer must apprehend and interpret the event with his own mental powers, just as an astronomer must observe the heavenly bodies and their movements, and by the intelligent faculties of his own mind find out their scientific significance. And if it is a prophetic revelation within the man's own consciousness, he must in like manner apprehend and interpret its significance. And he must do this, under the continued influence of the Spirit, but with his own faculties, in the light of his previous knowledge, and in view of the bearing of the revelation on existing conditions and circumstances. And as God's revelation pertains to the moral and spiritual in man, its reception and interpretation will depend on the moral and spiritual state of the man. Hence Christ compares his word to seed, the growth of which depends on the receptivity and condition of the soil on which it falls. Revelation must find in man some soil in which it can inhere and take root. Otherwise it is abortive. This distinguishes Christianity from heathen religions. In these the alleged revelations are not given through an intelligent, moral and personal medium. The Pythia uttered her oracles only when possessed by the god and beside herself in mantic fury. Christianity, on the contrary, insists that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

It must also be through a human medium that the revelation is communicated. Prophecy is communi-

cated first by the prophet who has received it And both historical revelation and prophetic are communicated by those who have received them, to all people The human spirit enlightened and fired by the Spirit of God is the only adequate agency for communicating God's revelation of himself in Christ to all mankind Hence our Saviour's command is, "Go ye"

The action of God in redemption and the revelation of himself made thereby as Redeemer is necessarily progressive This is not on account of any imperfection in God, but on account of the limitation and imperfection of man to whom the revelation is made and by whom it is received, communicated and perpetuated God's action in redemption and the revelation made by it go on in the courses of human history For this reason a large part of the Bible is a history of the ordinary actions of men and the ordinary providence of God in human affairs The revelation is the heavenly jewel, the human history is its necessary setting Hence along with the distinctively redemptive action go always the human agency and action through which it is connected with humanity Hence the revelation is everywhere related to the historical exigencies of the time, it bears the marks of the age and country in which it was given, and even of the individual prophet or apostle who received it Paul's epistles were written to meet existing conditions in the churches to which they were addressed The inspired writings are, in various forms, biography, history, doctrines and precepts, poetry, letters, proverbs and parables The revelation must, therefore, be progressive Facts and ideas familiar to all in modern civilization could not have been communicated in the languages of ancient time No prophet could have predicted intelligibly at the court of David, King of Israel, that on April 4, in the year of our Lord, 1885, in a battle fought that day with cannon and rifles in Egypt, a position was shelled by the English at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the news of the event

was sent by electric cable and announced in New York in America on the same day before the clock struck two in that city, that it was printed the same afternoon in the newspapers, and that one of these sent by rail was read in a town seventy miles from New York at seven o'clock the same evening. Here is the necessity that God's revelation of himself must be progressive. God can reveal himself no faster than is commensurate with the knowledge, the condition, the receptivity of the men on whom he acts and to whom and through whom he reveals himself. There must be a preparatory dispensation before Christ comes. The race must be educated to receive the larger revelation. The redemptive action must be adjusted to the existing capacity and condition of men, the light must be admitted gradually to the eye enfeebled in long darkness, a sudden excess of light would only dazzle and blind. Archbishop Whately illustrates this necessary progressiveness of revelation by a father writing letters to a son from early childhood to full manhood. A better illustration would be from a father living with his son, revealing himself as father both by what he does and by counsel and instruction, the son meanwhile from early childhood up keeping a diary record both of his father's act and of his counsel and teaching as received and understood by him at the time. The revelation of the father to the son as thus recorded would necessarily be progressive. The father would adapt his conduct, counsel and instruction to the unfolding capacity of the child. The child would record them with such capacity of apprehension and expression as he had at the time and in their application to the current events and the existing circumstances. And yet by the very process the father is progressively educating the son to capacity for larger and higher instruction, and to a more mature and complete understanding of the father's plan in educating him, and of his fatherly character and love.

All religions claim to rest on revelation. But not one of these alleged revelations, so far as it is the

tradition of the action of a god, declares any unity of plan and continuity of beneficent action on the part of the good, aiming at the spiritual renovation of human character and the reconciliation of man with God. The Christian revelation, on the contrary, is the manifestation of God bringing a divine life into the world, the coming of a divine energy into human history progressively revealing God as the redeemer of men from sin, and issuing in the coming of Christ, in whom God is reconciling the world to himself, and the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit is securely founded and begins to pervade the world.

Revelation is not an end in itself. God makes the revelation by his gracious action redeeming men from sin, the revelation is not an end in itself but is subordinate to the redemption of men from sin, and to the advancement of the kingdom of God, which in its progressive realization is the consummation of all good for mankind. What is revealed is God himself. God must be what he is before he can reveal himself as he is. His action in redemption is his revelation to man of what he is. His eternal ethical character is Love including both righteousness and good-will. He redeems men from sin, because redemption is the spontaneous and free acting out among and upon sinful men of his eternal ethical character. In this redemptive action he reveals himself as eternal Love. The revelation is incidental to his redemptive action, for, if he acts towards men at all, he will act out his eternal ethical character, and in acting it out he reveals himself as eternal Love. And the revelation is subordinate to the design of redemption, for the revelation of his love is made in his redemptive action in order to draw men away from their sin and misery to reconciliation with himself.

VI The Bible is the inspired record of God's action centering in Christ, redeeming men from sin and establishing his kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. It is not itself the reve-

lation, but it is the inspired record of the revelation and preserves its contents

The Bible is necessary for the preservation of the revelation. This is well expressed by Rothe: "Revelation should not be like a meteor flashing for a moment on the world, but should fix itself like the sun in the firmament to bring the full clear day over the whole circuit of the earth. It must then incorporate itself organically into the existence and life of the race, and become an historical power and thus a factor in the development of the world's history. To this end it must be written." As the kingdom grows the knowledge of God's past action in establishing it and especially of his coming in Christ, must be perpetuated and extended. And this is the design of the record in the Christian Scriptures. The Bible is not the revelation itself but the record of it, it is essential to its preservation. John Wallis, one of the clerks of the Westminster Assembly, said "The Scriptures in themselves are a lantern rather than a light." But they who would destroy the lantern in order that the light may shine more clearly would only find the light blown out.

The Bible is the record of God's action in Christ redeeming men from sin, as distinguished from a collection of doctrines and precepts revealed in propositions to inspired men, and form a record of the religious sentiments and experiences of pious persons. It is the record both of the historical or public, and of the prophetic or private revelations. But the latter are presented as they were given, in their historical setting, in their place in the history and their relation to the then existing conditions and exigencies of the divine kingdom, and they are seldom elaborated into formulas of doctrine or vindicated by any argument.

The Bible is not a collection of truths formulated in propositions, which God from time to time whispered in the ear to be communicated to the world as the unchanging formulas of thought and life for all time. It records indeed the teachings of prophets and apostles

it records the teachings of Christ—Logia, as Matthew Arnold calls them, “words of the master,” in which they, who regard him as a teacher only, find the whole significance of his mission. But, while these are of inestimable worth, they are not the essence of the biblical revelation. God reveals himself by his action on and before men. The revelation recorded in the Bible is that which God made by his historic action redeeming man from sin, culminating in Christ and in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit issuing in the continued agencies and influences of God’s redeeming grace working in humanity and transforming society into the kingdom of God. This historic redemption and the life arising from it are the essence of Christianity. The Bible therefore is not a system of philosophy, ethics or theology, it is not an “arsenal of proof-texts.” “The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). If we get out of it a system of truth as to God and his relations to man, we must do it as an astronomer gets a system of astronomy from the heavenly bodies, as a botanist gets a system of botany from the plants, as a statesman gets a system of political administration from the history of man. The facts are in the heavens, in the plants, in the history of man, the science is found by human observation and thought. It is only in an analogous way that we get our theology, by studying the facts of God’s historical action in redemption recorded in the Bible.

And this historic character of the Bible, instead of implying any detraction from its divine authority, greatly enhances its significance as a revelation of God.

It confirms its truth, as rooted in history. The Bible purports to be the record of a progress of God through human history reconciling man to himself and thus establishing in the hearts of men the reign of God, the divine kingdom of righteousness and goodwill, of peace and joy in God, a progress involving the coming of God in Christ, the Redeemer, from

whom the redeeming energy goes out through all the world and continues through all following ages extending and perpetuating the kingdom of Christ by the agency of men and women quickened to the life of faith and Christ-like love, under the influence of the ever present Spirit of God. The making of this biblical record went on through the ages, connected with the redemptive action and inseparable from the various exigencies of its progress and the divine manifestations made in them. The biblical record is rooted in the history which it records. The truth of the Bible is the truth of course of history. It can be rooted out from the life and history of man only when this whole history is rooted out.

The Bible itself also must be accounted for. It is a collection of small books written at different periods in the course of many centuries. The writers were of various conditions and acquirements, from kings and priests to shepherds and fishermen, some learned, some unlearned, living in widely separated ages and widely different conditions of society. The books were written in almost every variety of literary form. Their all-pervading idea of God's redemptive action and kingdom is unique, found nowhere in human literature outside of the Bible and the range of its influence. This great idea sets forth as the end to be attained, the highest life of man, the realization of the highest possibilities of his being in righteousness and good-will and reconciliation with God, and the universal extension of a spiritual kingdom of renewed men. Yet these many authors, writing each about the events and with the culture and under the influence of their nation and age, grasp and unfold this unique idea as they saw it, in the forms and coloring respectively of their own times. Such a result was possible only if God was really moving through the ages in his redemptive action and thus actually making the revelation which these books record.

Not only is the Bible rooted in the history of the past, but it challenges verification from the history of

the future. It finds the true significance of history in the relation of man to the God of righteousness and grace and in the perpetuation and advancement of his spiritual kingdom among men. And as these ends shall be more and more realized in the progressive history of man, the verification of the Bible will be continually going on.

Contrast the Bible, thus the outgrowth of the ages, with the Koran, which records no redemptive action of God in humanity through the ages, which had no roots in the past, but was the creation of a single man in a small part of a single life-time, and professes to be only the record of private communications made secretly to him.

Thus the conception of the Bible which I have presented shows the irresistible evidence of its truth as the product of God's historical action through the ages.

And this sets aside the objection of F. W. Newman, Rousseau and others, that revelation made in a book is impossible. As Rousseau puts it, "revelation is not possible even though God could wish it, for as the first truths are cognizable to all intuitively, no other truths, as truths of religion, can rise to the same rank." Certainly reason must always be supreme in the sphere of truth. No miracles can prove that it is right to hate one's neighbour. But the objection rests wholly on the supposition that the Bible is a collection of ready-made propositions divinely revealed. It is of no force against the Bible rightly received. For the revelation is not "made in a book," but made in the historical action of God in his redeeming grace, and is only recorded in the book. And this ought to have been perceived by Rousseau himself when he put into the mouth of the Savoyard vicar his much admired confession of the revelation of the divine in the life of Christ.

And this conception of the Bible gives it a certain independence of the results of criticism. If the Bible is a collection of propositions given directly by God, then one error throws suspicion on all. But if the

revelations made in God's historical action in Israel preparatory to Christ's coming and then in Christ himself, then a single error of fact does not invalidate the history as a whole, as the recent discovery that Pocahontas did not interpose between Captain Smith and the club of the savage does not disprove the history of Virginia nor of these persons themselves. Critical discussions of the date and authorship of Deuteronomy do not destroy the credibility of the history of Israel, nor the fact that Messianic prophecy pervaded its literature, nor the fact that the distinctive service of Israel to humanity was to communicate the knowledge of the one true God and to bring Christ and his benign religion into the world. So Ewald rebukes "many inquirers of modern times, who give themselves the air of being very wise and circumspect, and not only scorn to pursue the modest traces on the ground—preferring the mazes of their own invention,—but will surrender even such a lofty and conspicuous person as Moses, the Man of God." And if one is convinced on scientific grounds that Joshua did not cause the sun to stand still, or on critical grounds that an angel did not trouble the waters in the pool of Bethesda, these conclusions do not make it necessary to disbelieve that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself or to abandon all our religious faith and hope in him. If our faith rests on the letter of the Bible, it stands unstable, like an inverted pyramid on its apex, and the disturbance, of a letter by criticism overturns our faith. But if our faith rests on God as the redeemer of men revealed in his gracious action in the history recorded in the Bible, nothing can unsettle our faith which does not unsettle the whole course of the history.

It must be added that nothing can take away this faith which does not equally take its deepest significance from the life of every individual and from the history of mankind. Man bound to the world of sense and shut up within the life of selfish appetite and desire cannot realize the nobleness of life, the ideal of

his being nor his true good His desires grow by gratification, and his getting, with his most eager diligence, can never overtake his discontent He is the Prometheus bound whose ever living heart is gnawed by ever consuming greed and insatiable desires It is the life of insatiable longing and fruitless pursuit which Goethe has pictured over and over, in *Werther*, in *Wilhelm Meister*, in *Faust*, and in a peculiar form in his *Tasso*, one type of the living in the visions of the poet, in the sensitiveness of the artist, in the refinement of high culture, and bewildered and hurt by contact with the realities of life In these characters Goethe pictures himself and the life of unsatisfied yearning and endless unrest in which, as he said in his later years he himself had lived Life can be redeemed from this fruitless activity and ever goading restlessness only as man knows himself in his relations to God and his likeness to him, and in the life of faith in God and universal love becomes a worker with God to extend his kingdom of righteousness and good-will, and thus realizes his own perfection and well-being and sees his earthly life and work unfolding into the life eternal Then life is found to be no longer a failure, a series of illusions and disappointments, vanity of vanities and vexation of spirit, but a sphere for the noblest work and the achievement of the noblest ends, rich, and satisfying alike in the pursuit and the attainment, in which success is assured in the progressive realization of the highest possibilities of the being and in promoting the highest welfare of man In a Christian life there is no place for the despairing question,—Is life worth living? A great philosopher said "I have spent my life in labouriously doing nothing" A great emperor said "I have tried everything, and nothing is of any profit" Goethe said his life had been a continual rolling of a stone up hill, which as continually rolled back But Paul said "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for

me the crown of righteousness," in the retrospect, fidelity, earnestness and achievement, in the future, beyond the bloody death, a continued career from glory to glory

The same line of thought is true of the history of mankind. The highest destiny of the individual determines the highest destiny of mankind. Human history has no worthy object except as there is in the process of realization among men a kingdom of God in which all possible perfection, blessedness and worth are progressively attained on earth, and which, as the successive generations of men pass away, is unfolding into the kingdom of heaven. Pessimism is the necessary conception of the life and destiny of the individual and of the history and destiny of mankind, if we must leave out the high possibilities of man's being which are involved in his participation in the light of the divine Reason, in his likeness to God in his rational and free personality, in the fact of God's redeeming action revealing himself in human history, and in man's capacity and privilege to commune with God and to be a worker with him in the advancement of his kingdom of righteousness and good-will. So Victor Hugo says "God is found at the end of all. Let us not forget it, but let us teach it to all, there would be no dignity in living, and life would not be worth its pain, if we are to die totally. That which alleviates toil, which sanctifies work, which renders man strong, good, wise, patient, beneficent, just, at once humble and great, worthy of intelligence, worthy of liberty, is the having before him the perpetual vision of a better world shining through the darkness of this life."

The Bible is also the medium of fellowship with the people of God in all the ages. It reveals God in his redeeming grace, and the faith in him which has vitalized the Christian experience of his people in all the ages. Thus, while the Christian under the influence of the Spirit finds God revealed in the Bible directly to his own soul, he therein also finds himself in fellowship with all who have trusted the God of grace as he

has revealed himself in ages past Our God is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob As Paul declares, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." We utter our devotion in the words of penitence, trust, and praise, in the Hebrew Psalms In the New Testament we are brought into communion with Christ and his apostles In the first words of the prayer which our Lord taught us we must recognize this fellowship with all men, and say, "Our father" Whatever destroys our belief of God's revelation of himself recorded in the Bible, also dissolves into illusion all which is deepest, purest and most ennobling in the fellowship of men

With the historical conception of the Bible we shall interpret it more correctly, shall apprehend its significance in greater richness and fulness, and shall apply it practically with more wisdom and efficiency

We shall interpret it more correctly The Bible is the record of God's historical action redeeming men from sin and in it revealing himself as the God of righteousness and grace As in a grand panorama it discloses to us God moving in the courses of human history, revealing both the depths and heights of his own love, and the greatness and worth, the sin and the needs, the possibilities and opportunities of man. The study of it as a mere collection of doctrines and precepts, of religious sentiments and experience, must miss much of its true meaning and lead into positive error

Its significance also will be seen with greater richness and fullness Dean Stanley used to speak of the Bible as "having far more in it than has ever been taken out of it" The study of the Bible as the history of God's revelation of himself in redeeming the world from sin, is the study of a theme which is inexhaustible, it is "to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" The study of the prophetic revelations in their place in the history and their relation to the exigencies

of the kingdom opens in them new reality and meaning. The study of any event or period of the history in its relation to the progressive development of the redemptive action, opens new and rich mines of instruction. And the life and death and resurrection of Christ, in their moral and spiritual significance, will always be in advance of the progress of man.

And the beneficent moral influence of the Bible is the greater because it records God's revelation of himself by his action in human history. God reveals himself not to scholars only but to mankind. The historical is the most effective method of reaching all minds. "History is philosophy teaching by examples." A Unitarian writer, trying to explain the superior power of the evangelical preaching, gave as the reason the fact that the evangelical conception of revelation is more dramatic. It opens with Eden and the Fall, it discloses God visiting judgments on men for sin, the flood, the storm of fire on Sodom; giving his law and entering into covenant with the people at Sinai, going before them and encamping among them, the light of his tabernacle seen every evening from the surrounding tents. Then it shows him revealed among men in Christ going about doing good, bearing men's sorrows and sins, opening the inmost heart of God in love to men even to the cross, then rising triumphant over death in man's behalf, reigning in heaven bearing them always on his heart, and yet dwelling among men everywhere and always in his Spirit, unseen, yet closer to them and more intimate with them than when his tabernacle was among them or even when in Christ he was with them on the earth. It is dramatic indeed, but it is the drama of God's real history among men seeking the lost and reconciling sinners to himself. The revelation of God in this great drama of redemption is the power of the Bible. The Bible is the glass through which we look back through the vista of the ages and see God moving among men in his righteousness and grace, educating them to capacity to know him, and

to know themselves in their true dignity and capacity in their relation to him, developing them to receptivity of larger communications of his grace and to greater spiritual power in achieving great results in the service of God and man, and thereby to the development of themselves toward perfection and the realization of the highest possibilities of spiritual love, wisdom, beauty, and power, and thus bringing in everlasting righteousness and so revealing himself with ever increasing glory as the Saviour of man. Here is the fullest revelation of man, opening to us in long vistas the significance of his history in the past and of his destiny in the future. Here also God makes the fullest revelation of himself. His archetypal plan comes into view traced in the long line of his righteous and gracious action through the past and brightening onward into the glories of the future, in redemption he comes into multiplied and intimate connections with man and therein reveals himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, his inmost being seems to unfold to sight in the fulness of his communication of himself to sinful men in saving them from sin, the depths of his love and wisdom are opened to view, as when the doors of a great palace are thrown open and we look in on its rich rooms and lengthening halls.

But notwithstanding this wide range through history, this world-wide grandeur and magnificence of God's revelation of himself and of his kingdom recorded in the Bible, or rather for these very reasons, it is the book which brings God nearest to the individual believer and closest to his own personal experience and spiritual needs. It is to every Christian a word in season, a word to the heart. And like no other book it comes to the spiritual mind with a self-revealing and self-evidencing power and convinces him of the divine authority of the revelation which it declares. As Rothe says "What most impresses the right reader of the Bible is just this, that in it and nowhere else the Christian religious truths which he has longest confessed come to him as with supernatural light, with such

original truth to nature, such fresh breathing life, such transparent purity, such majestic and commanding authority, that he finds himself immediately convinced of their reality and obliged to give himself up to them."

VII After Christ's ascension the divine action in redemption is continued by the Holy Spirit

The belief in a divine influence on men is not peculiar to Christianity. It is commonly recognized in some form in the ethnic religions. The peculiarity of Christianity in this respect is that the Spirit of God in his universal presence continues the work of redemption. The redeeming energy of God which centred in Christ, proceeds from him in the Holy Spirit, perpetuating and diffusing the offers, the influences and agencies of God's redeeming grace. Thus the Spirit is distinctively the divine witness to Christ through all the ages. God does not complete redemption in the earthly history of Christ. In him he makes atonement for sin and opens the way for the outpouring of the influences of his grace in all their fulness on all mankind in the Holy Spirit. Nor does he leave the communication of the glad tidings of his grace in Christ to the record of it in the Bible and to the faithfulness and diligence of his people. But in the Spirit he continues to dwell and act among men, testifying of God's grace in Christ and with divine influences drawing them to return to him in faith and love. Hence the testimony of God himself in the Spirit to Christ and the divine grace in him is given in the soul of men who open their hearts and minds to receive it, and this goes with the Bible and the efforts of the church to perpetuate Christian faith among men.

But here again the witness is not by communicating a truth to the intellect, but by actually continuing the work of redeeming men from sin by quickening them to the new and spiritual life, inspiring them to Christ-like love and work in drawing men away from sin and advancing Christ's kingdom on earth, and so

developing them in spiritual purity, completeness and power

The knowledge of Christ by his disciples and their communion with him were necessarily incomplete while he was with them in the flesh for his presence was limited to one place, and the great revelation by his death, resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Spirit, was not yet made. After he was gone their knowledge of him and communion with him were more complete. Then they began, under the quickening of the Spirit, to tread with intelligence the Way of Christ and to preach him with power. So Christ himself had said, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.'

Therefore the influence of Jesus after his death is not merely like the posthumous influence of a great man, surviving in the remembrance of this life, in the consequences of his deeds, the record of his instructions, or even in the institutions which he founded. He is present and acting among men in the Spirit whom he sends and in whom he is administering his kingdom of grace on the earth. Thus is his own word fulfilled "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We must not suppose that God's work of redemption was finished in the earthly life of Christ—a transitory wonder, like the sheet let down from heaven before the astonished eyes of Peter and then drawn up again and seen no more. It continues through the history of man. And thus even the symbolization of the Scriptures represents. In the theophanies the common symbol of God's manifestation was light, the flaming sword which guarded Eden, the burning bush, the fire and cloud which guided Israel in the wilderness, which enveloped Sinai and filled the tabernacle and the temple, the overpowering glory before which prophets fell and became as dead men. This peculiar manifestation of God the Jews called the Shechinah. The same symbol repeatedly manifested the glory of the Christ, in the bright cloud which overshadowed him in his transfiguration, and

which received him at his ascension, in the glory brighter than the sun in which he appeared to Paul, in the resplendence in which he was seen by John in Patmos, his face like the sun shining in his strength and his very feet like brass heated to whiteness in a furnace. The same symbol manifested the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, cloven tongues of fire on each disciple. It is a fit symbol, for light with its accompanying heat is the guide of all action and the nourisher of all life, it is essentially pure, incapable of taking on itself any defilement even by contact with pollution, and purifying even to burning. The Shechina is, indeed, no longer seen, the voice of God speaking from heaven is no longer heard. "No angel's pinion gleams along the empyrean now." But the Spirit of God, silent and all-pervading, is perpetually carrying forward redemption to its consummation. And in this we have an advantage. While the ancient revelations were made to favored prophets and apostles and were by them communicated, the Spirit comes with the Gospel to each and all. His divine influence is at once universal and individualizing, it pervades the whole, it concentrates on every one. It knocks at every door, it enters every opened heart and dwells within it. This universality and individualization were perhaps symbolized by the manner of his manifestation on the day of Pentecost the Shechina broken up into lambent flames resting severally on every one.

In his parting words to his disciples the Lord had said "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," "all authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth," and he had promised, after his exaltation to send to them his Spirit who should abide with them forever. The descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the present token and pledge that the Lord had triumphantly accomplished all which he had said, and that in his exaltation he remembered his disciples left on earth and had fulfilled his promise. And the influence

of God's Spirit on any human heart through all time is a present token and pledge of the same. Nor is this all. By the influence of the Spirit we are brought into immediate connection with the Lord, as the rays of the sun falling on us bring us into immediate connection with the sun. In that influence the energy of redeeming grace strikes on our souls we are brought into contact with the heart of God and feel the throbbing of his love knocking evermore for a responsive love. Then, rejoicing in God, we rise up new witnesses from our own experience of the power of God to redeem from condemnation and sin. And through all the Christian ages every one who has had the like experience has become a witness to Christ revealed in his own consciousness by the Spirit of God. Then united testimony comes to us from all the ages like that which John heard from the hosts of the blessed in heaven, "as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and they sing as it were a new song." This is the witness of the Spirit to Christ in the consciousness and the deepest experience of every Christian.

VIII Christianity is ideal as well as historical. But the ideal Christ necessarily implies the historical Christ.

Rationalistic writers have attempted to retain an ideal Christ while neglecting or rejecting the historical. So Strauss "The attempt to retain in combination the ideal in Christ with the historical having failed, these two elements separate themselves, the latter falls as a natural residuum to the ground, and the former rises as a pure sublimate to the ethereal world of ideas."

The reply is that the ideal Christianity can be found only in the historical Christ. This is exemplified in the author just now quoted, who misses the distinctive idea of Christianity. The same must be the failure of every attempt to find the ideal Christ without the historical. Christianity assumes as already existing a knowledge of God and his law, of sin and

the need of reconciliation with God. These are not distinctive of Christianity. All that is peculiar and distinctive in Christianity is known only in the revelation which God makes of himself in his action in human history redeeming men from sin and centering in Christ.

So Biedermann says "The Christian religion will be the redemption of the natural man out of his disunion from God into freedom in God through the full revelation of God's grace in Jesus Christ, the object of its faith." God reveals himself in redemptive action centering in Christ. But we must interpret that action and read the idea of God and of man set forth in it. We stand before the redemptive action in Christ as the scientist stands before the physical world, reads the thought expressed in its masses and molecules and their interaction, and thus apprehends them in science. So we observe God's action in Christ redeeming men from sin, read in it the thought or idea which it expresses, and thus apprehend it in theology. It is said there is no theology in the history of Christ and no theology in the biblical history, and in the same sense it is true that there is no science in nature. The science in the one case and the theology in the other is simply the apprehension and enunciation of the idea or thought disclosed in the facts. In each it is the facts translated into thought and so apprehended, distinguished and comprehended in the mind. There can be no astronomical knowledge of the sun except what is obtained from the sun itself, and the ideal sun of science implies the existence of the real sun. So the distinctive truths of Christianity can be found only in Christ and the historical redemption in him. And necessarily if the ideal Christ is accepted as true, the historical Christ must be accepted as real.

At whatever point we find a spiritual truth or motive distinctive of Christianity, we find it inherent in the historical Christ and the historical action centering in him.

While in other religions man thinks of himself as seeking God, in Christ God reveals himself as seeking man. While in other religions men think themselves obliged to make God propitious, God reveals himself in Christ as graciously disposed towards sinners, not only willing to forgive any who return to him, but seeking men in their sins to draw them back to filial trust in him and so to reinstate them in their normal condition of union with God. His attitude toward the sinner is not merely that of the father willing to receive the prodigal son when he returns in penitence and lags, but also that of the shepherd going out on the mountains to seek and recover the sheep that had strayed from the fold, exposing himself to the perils of the mountain's storms and cold, its slippery precipices and savage beasts, from which he seeks to save the sheep. "God so loved the world" God's good-will, his gracious disposition to save, precedes the sinner's return. If not, the sinner would return in vain. And when man by sinning has disrupted his union with God, has rushed away in his isolation and individuation, and his will is set in his self-efficiency on himself as his supreme object of trust and service, then if left unsought and untouched by God, he would have no disposition to return. But God, "not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance," follows the sinner with his love on his darkening away, as the sun follows with its attraction a comet in its remotest flight to draw it back to itself.

This is God's attitude always toward all for whom Christ died. But this doctrine is not independent of God's historical action redeeming men from sin in Christ, it merely declares one item of its significance.

In Christ God unites himself, not with a particular man already existing, but with humanity itself in all its essential attributes. In him God enters humanity with redeeming grace, and from him pours into humanity the divine Light and Life and Love to renovate man to spiritual life and draw him back into union with himself. In Christ God is revealed in his grace

to man, and man is revealed in his normal condition in union with God and in the realization of his archetypal perfection. Christ is the new Head of the human race in whom man is to be born of the Spirit and quickened to a new spiritual life, and is to realize the perfection and good which he has missed by separating himself from God in sin. Thus Christ is "the manifestation of a person in whom the eternally ideal had become the historically real."

The same dependence of the idea of Christianity on the historical Christ appears in the progress of Christianity, both in the renovation of individuals and the progress of the kingdom of Christ. A distinctive doctrine of Christianity appears in its unique idea of the kingdom of Christ on earth, the community of those who have been reunited to God through his redeeming grace, and by their common union with God in Christ are united with one another in fellowship in the Christian community. This kingdom is in the world like the leaven and the mustard seed, and as it spreads and grows, is gradually transforming human society into the kingdom of God. We note its coming in the spiritual renovation of individuals, in the training of children for Christ, in the moral purification of society, in every overthrow of wicked institutions, usages and laws, in every reformation which is a real and permanent uplift of society. And while it is thus renovating individuals and society in this life, it is from generation to generation continuously flowing over like a great river into the ocean into the life eternal in heaven. And so it is to continue till the consummation of human history on earth. And this will be in the coming of the historical Christ and the awarding to all men of their destiny by him in the final judgment. But the progress of Christ's kingdom through the ages is not by the power of truth alone. But in his kingdom on earth Christ is present in his Spirit, in whom the light and energy of his redeeming grace are brought to bear on men. As Paul says, "The Lord is the Spirit." It is in and through

the Spirit that Christ is in us and we in Christ, and our normal condition of union with God is attained anew. Hence "the ideal Christ" is not a subjective idea of our own minds, nor truth and precept intellectually apprehended. Rather, if we must speak of the ideal Christ, it is the living Spirit of Christ pervading humanity with the offers and influences of redeeming grace brought into the world through him and revealing him in our own consciousness.

Therefore the spiritual doctrine, precept and motive of Christianity centre on the historical Christ and the historical action of God in redemption wrought through him. If the ideal Christ is true, the historical Christ is real. For the essence of Christianity is not speculative nor ethical philosophy, but the redemption of man from sin in the person of Jesus Christ.

Christianity has its doctrine, its speculative and ethical philosophy, but they rest on the historical facts of redemption through Christ, and take up and express their significance. They grasp the true idea and greatness of man, the significance of his history, the ideal of his perfection and well-being, and the possibilities of his destiny, with a depth, clearness and comprehensiveness wanting in all philosophy which takes no note of the real facts of man's relation to God. It is only as man is known in his relation to God in redemption that we get the true philosophy of his history, the true conception of man himself and of the possibilities of his being, and of human society in its true progress and destiny. Man's history and destiny remain inexplicable to the reason until we know him in his relation to God in Christ redeeming him from sin. It is evident therefore that the ideal Christ cannot be separated from the historical. The fact that we have the ideal can be accounted for only by the historical existence of the real Christ. As Professor Hedge says "If the Christ of the church is an ideal being, it was Jesus who made the ideal. The ideal in him is simply the result of that disengagement from the earthly vestiture which

death and distance work in all who live in history" And Theodore Parker says " Shall we be told, ' Such a man never lived , the whole story is a lie ? ' Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived , that their story is a lie But who did their works and thought their thought ? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton What man could have fabricated Jesus ? None but Jesus "

Therefore in seeking the central idea of Christianity we must begin with the revelation of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. If Christ is the God in man redeeming man from condemnation and sin, if the story of that wondrous life and death and triumph over death is true, then in its full scope and ultimate intent it cannot have been designed for any nation or section of men exclusively, but it is broad and deep as humanity. It cannot be limited in its influence to any partial sphere of human thought and action, but must throw its light and influence on all. Christian theology must centre on it. Philosophy cannot be complete if it takes no note of this great revelation of God in his relation to man, and of man in his relation to God. Even in relation to physical science it answers questions which the science inevitably raises, but which it makes no attempt to answer because they reach beyond its province, and it declares the worthy ends for which the world exists and the glorious issues of its evolution in the future. It must be the central fact in human history, essential to disclose the true significance of historical events and periods, and the true principles and aims of human politics, civilization and progress, and to reveal in the progressive kingdom of God the highest destiny of man. It is also central in the life of the individual man, the very turning point of his destiny, as it comes to him in the invitation and energy of God's redeeming grace, awakening him to the consciousness of spiritual relations, obligations and privileges, calling him to enter the kingdom of God which has come to him, drawing him to return to union and communion with God.

NATIONAL FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY.

[JESUS on 'one occasion said—"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt vii 17-19) On another occasion he said—"Though ye believe not me believe the works that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in Him" Now while an individual person may know the work of Christ in his own soul, yet it is often difficult for outsiders to do so while it is comparatively easy to know what effect the acceptance of Christ has had on a whole people, nation, tribe or community. Note has of late been taken of this by three learned men who have written most useful and instructive works on the subject. These are Professor Schmidt of Germany in his "*Social Results of Early Christianity*," and the two American writers C Loring Brace in his "*Gesta Christi*, or a history of humane Progress under Christianity," and Dr R. S. Storrs in his "*Divine Origin of Christianity* indicated by its historical effects." The summing up of Dr Storrs' interesting and learned Lectures constitutes the following paper. Along with these volumes, the reader might also with profit consult S R Pattison's *Gospel Ethnology* published by the Religious Tract Society. Mr Brace's *Gesta Christi*, and Dr Storrs' *Divine Origin* are published by Messrs Hodder and Stoughton.—Ed.]

Taking the state of human society as it palpably was before this religion was declared in the world, and comparing it with that which has since appeared, I have exhibited to you my conviction that certain peculiar and transcendent elements have entered the governing life of mankind through this religion, and that its effect thus far has been to elevate and purify, to

up-lift and set forward, in a wholly unique mode and measure, the race to which an impulse was brought by it immense and commanding

In pursuing this general line of thought, I have shown, as I think, that a new and nobler conception of God was certainly thus made familiar to the world. one naturally surpassing anything which had been reached on the same majestic and inspiring theme, either in the popular religions of antiquity, or in the highest philosophy of that time one in which the sublime elements of that discovery of God to the Hebrews which preceded Christianity were accepted, combined, and magnificently surpassed, by a fresh and surely a supreme exhibition of Love as the inmost life of God's being, of holiness as its perfect manifestation, and of the Divine self-sacrifice as its fruit. The effect of this Christian doctrine of God on the mental and moral life of mankind, and on the civilization which gives to that life its constant exhibition, can hardly, it would seem, be overstated

I have shown also, or sought to show, that a change in large measure corresponding with this has been wrought in the conception which man now has, so far as this religion has reached him, of the dignity and worth of his own nature that since Christianity made its appeal, which all must admit to be vast and majestic, and which it affirms to be Divine, to every person to whom its teachings and documents come, as the ancient religions or speculative moralities had not done—since it showed God, taking its statement of things as true, as interested in man, and declared Immortality waiting for him, with such a solemn and sovereign emphasis as was wholly unparalleled in any poetry or any religion before it was preached—the soul of man, for its own sake, amid whatever accidents of condition, has been recognized as worthy of nobler care and higher honor, and whatever involves this idea, and is animated by it has had a prominence and a permanence in the Christian society such as before were unimagined

I have shown also, or sought to show, the new conception which plainly and certainly came to the world with the teaching of Jesus concerning the duty which man owes to God in the sphere of Worship how the old forms of external sacrifice passed away on the instant, wherever this religion appeared, how for such was substituted the more intimate and inestimable sacrifice of self, in the conquest of whatever within the soul is alien to God, and in consecration to His Divine service, what a power of love was then shown in worship, unknown in the world until that hour, and what joy was expressed in it, with a new-born and reverent faith—articulate in music in mighty and exulting hymns, in great liturgies and creeds, after a time in the very structure of the houses for praise, and how this spirit is contemplated by Christianity as working abroad into the entire texture of life and as properly impenetrating and devoting to the Most High all active powers, in all their exercise, in the manifold labor and endurance of man

The new conception of man's duty to Man introduced by this religion, I tried equally to illustrate showing the energy and the beautiful fruit of it, especially in the cases where its moral force most distinctly collides with previous established custom or law, in giving protection and aid to the weak as in the instance of little children, of woman, systematically reduced in antiquity to unjust subordination, of the enslaved, with those incapacitated for the struggle of life by sickness, destitution, or by native infirmity of body or of mind As the sun in the heavens turns winter ice to rippling streams, so the gospel of Galilee has certainly, to a great extent, throughout the domains which it affects, turned wealth and power into the channels of cordial beneficence It carries to-day into millions of cabins secure liberty, more abundant prosperity, a new aspiration, a more animating hope, and while its results are yet confessedly incomplete, awaiting a consummation still to be realized, in each of those already attained lies the prediction of other

social and political wisdom, I have not sought to conceal from your view. It is as evident to me as to any one. But that the power of the Christian religion has been behind it, and behind these instruments conspiring to assist it, seems no less apparent, and if that now were withdrawn from the world, with its teaching and law, and its spiritual impression — if peoples and governments were left to no other guidance and control in their moral relations than those which preceded the advent of Christ—I see no guaranty that the old chaos of jealous and contending nations might not return in fiercer fight with bloodier weapons a more terrible tyranny of the stronger powers over the weak.

In developing the effect of the new religion on the mental culture and training of mankind I showed how such a religion, of necessity, sets the mind on which its powerful impact falls into instant, various, and wide-ranging action, to find in other departments of knowledge its illustrations and proofs, or, if that must be, to find arguments against it, how it builds up always a rich and fruitful middle class mind, and how at the same time it ministers with intrinsic vigor to higher minds, sending them forth on all quests for truth, giving the incentive, and creating the instruments, for every species of intelligent research. Its literatures multiply, its schools expand and grow to universities by a law of its nature. It exalts the mental spirit of man, instead of depressing it, by the tender, majestic, harmonious discovery of things supernatural, which is one of its vital characteristics. It opens remotest realms of speculation by its circumspect silences, before each inquisitive spirit. And the contrast of its continual effect, in this direction, with those of the various ethnic religions, boasting also their sacred books, but assisting no wide intellectual progress, and giving birth to no benign literatures, is like the contrast, ever repeated, of the day with the night, or of life with death.

When we turn to consider the moral effects accomplished by this religion, not on individuals only, or in limited communities, but on the scale of national life,

and in countries and capitals most advanced in arts, industries, and accumulated resources, the influence of it appears if possible yet more remarkable, as well as more salutary. It came to communities cultured in letters, instructed in arts, mighty in arms, but to a great extent morally rotten with luxury and lust, the prey of degraded and savage passions, the story of whose life, and the picture of whose manners, are almost too fearful to be contemplated accustomed to spectacles, and to sensual excesses, which now would make any country so infamous that the world would expect the globe itself to open beneath it and swallow it up. Christianity, in its worship, its humanity, its charity, in the inflexible fidelity to truth which it demanded, and in the heroic energy of faith toward a Master unseen which it inspired, struck down upon this ancient life, in the most cruel and dissolute capitals, as a veritable gleam from worlds celestial, and though it encountered tremendous resistance, of law, argument, fierce invective, stinging satire, of the society which it rebuked, of the government which it challenged, of military opposition, and of popular persecutions unparalleled in the frenzied fury of their onset,—it overcame that resistance, awakened an enthusiasm which spurned and curbed the assailing hostility, converted some of its noblest champions by their recoil toward its amazing serenity amid storms, and finally became master of the empire, by its moral force, aided by whatever of Divine providence we may recognize in its history.

If it did not accomplish all that might seem desirable to us, it made at any rate the former conditions of personal and of public life impossible to be repeated. It was something to put Constantine in the place of Galerius, and to set a man like Leo the Great on the throne defiled in imperial days with hideous and indescribable crime. It was something, afterwards, to take the savage nomadic populations which rushed in upon the empire, and to build up from them Christian States, in which vice exists but without repute, in

which no man in eminent station could repeat with impunity any one of thousands of uncriticized excesses of Roman Senators, in which the strongest throne would fall if the Sovereign upon it were now to repeat a single one of many crimes of the ancient emperors. Until Christianity has wholly impressed with its transforming power the nature of man, it cannot banish iniquity from the earth. But it has, at any rate, branded vice, in whatever station, with indelible mark. It has forced upon vast communities of men the sense of the necessity of righteousness in the spirit, as the source and the safeguard of righteousness in conduct. And its prodigious force has been shown, in instances uncounted, in the new purity to which it has lifted those most depraved, who seemed abandoned of God and man. Once let it come to its perfect contemplated supremacy in the world, and a society as pure as the Sermon on the Mount, as radiant as the whiteness of the transfigured robe, as supreme against evil as was the Lord in whom the religion was then incarnated, must be its immortal and illustrious trophy.

Finally, this religion has given to the race a hope for the future, in the coming ages of earthly history, which was not known, and which could not be, while a Divine providence was not recognized over all, and when there was no force whatever, known to statesmen, conjectured by philosophers, by which a certain moral progress, toward ultimate issues of liberty and of peace, could be assured to the multiform clashing societies of mankind. It has dissipated the fears which were in the mightiest empire of the earth, when it began its novel and astounding work. It has widened the view encouraged by the earlier Hebrew system. It has turned the general gaze of man from the past, to which they were wont to look back as the Golden Age, toward the future whose promise grows more inviting as the tread of the centuries approaches it nearer. It has shown in itself the power to reconcile, to liberate, and to set forward nations, with a steadiness and a strength

which had certainly before been unknown in the world. That power continues absolutely unwasted by all the periods which have witnessed its exercise, by all the conflicts through which it has passed. It has never been more signally declared than in recent years — in amended legislations, expanded philanthropies, widened missions, and inspired by its instinctive energy, as well as taught by its consummating prophecy, the peoples who receive the religion of the Christ now expect each century to be brighter than the past, all tending to the final reign on the earth of righteousness and of wisdom. It is this which invigorates every effort of disciples to extend their religion, and which gives to their prayer impulse and joy.

This has been the work of this Christian religion, as thus far accomplished, in the world which first heard it from Jesus of Nazareth. In detail, very likely, it may be questioned if every particular of the manifold progress to which I have referred is to be ascribed to it as its source. And I have not hidden, from your eyes or from mine, the fact that much remains to be accomplished — that a picture might even now be drawn of Christendom as it is of this very city, which would almost tempt one to feel for the moment that Christianity itself had found the work committed to it too vast and hard to be performed, the spirit of man too vehement and refractory to be subdued, and that the promise of such a future as those taught by it fondly contemplate is only a delightful delusion of faith. I admit the justice of much of that sharp condemnation of society which implies a higher standard of judgment than was known in the old world, with a finer and more imperative sense of the paramount authority of an ideal rectitude. I repeat, too, what I said at the beginning, that if this religion did come from God, it could have come only because there was imminent moral need of it, and that, therefore, until its celestial supremacy is wholly complete, great evils must be expected to continue, resistant forces, yet unconquered, must be looked for.

In spite of all such, it seems to me beyond the reach of intelligent dispute that the broad, permanent, general effects to which I have adverted, have been the result of the coming of this religion to the world. In the aggregate, I see not how they can be denied, until we re-make the Past, or until we accept the Indian doctrine that 'all is illusion,' and apply it to Christendom. I see too that they have come, not as casually associated with the religion, by a force from without, but as vitally involved in its constitution—made necessary by palpable elements in its structure, which none will dispute, proceeding from it as the steam from its source, or as radiant effulgence from the substance of the sun. Nor is it true here, as may be sometimes elsewhere the case, that the many particulars hide from our view the great general outline, so that one 'cannot see the forest, on account of the trees.' The vast result which is always before us, in the work of this religion, manifestly and mightily transcends the most careful catalogue of particulars. The world is a new one, not wholly, but surely in significant measure, since Jesus met his death on the cross. And there is no sign in all the heavens that the influence which thus has emanated from him is now or hereafter to be arrested—that the race will swing back, could do so if it wished, to the spiritual carelessness, the enthroned cruelty, the deified lust, of the earlier time all rooted in the ignorance of God and the Hereafter. Match London, or Paris, or the Rome of to-day, against the Rome or the Corinth of Paul—match the Colosseum as now it stands, with the cross in its centre, against the Colosseum filled with its thousands of shouting spectators, looking on with delight, as one sees them outlined in the picture of Gérôme, at the horrible slaughter of animals or of men—and we seem to be on a different planet. The victories of this gentlest and most spiritual of Faiths, have surely, thus far been indisputably grand.

I am not unmindful of the fact, which I hope you will also clearly recognize, that still one great and rich

department, in some respects the richest of all, in the work which Christianity has accomplished in the world has scarcely been touched in this series of Lectures—the department, that is, of what may be called its individual victories, over men like Augustine, whom it converted, and afterwards richly instructed and inspired, or like Norbert, of the twelfth century, whom it transformed, on occasion of a startling natural occurrence, from an utterly reckless and dissolute courtier, into an apostolic preacher, whose sermons flashed the fire of conviction on multitudes of hearts, and seemed to open Heaven to the faithful. Such conquests of this religion have been repeated in many men and many women conspicuous in history, whom it has brought out of darkness into light, out of sin into holiness, and out of a passionate love of the world into fervent and supreme adoration of God. If the scheme of these Lectures allowed another to be added to the series, no other theme could have been so inviting, no other, I think, so rewarding to our thoughts, as the one thus suggested—since in such examples we see brought, as it were, into a focus, the spiritual energies which elsewhere are exhibited in their general operation, and the impression thence resulting is like that of the sunbeam when by the lens its associated rays are concentrated upon the hand. The flesh which before had hardly felt it, then responds to its touch with instant thrill. Indeed, such instances of spiritual victory over minds and hearts set in stubborn resistance to its appeals are in themselves the surpassing effects of Christian power, clearest, grandest, and most characteristic.

In a memorable passage by Macaulay, in his essay on Mitford's History of Greece, he says of Athens, with a scholar's enthusiasm: "Her power is indeed manifest at the bar, in the senate, on the field of battle, in the schools of philosophy. But these are not her glory. Wherever literature consoles sorrow, or assuages pain—wherever it brings gladness to eyes which fail with wakefulness and tears, and ache for the dark house and the long sleep—there is exhibited

in its noblest form, the immortal influence of Athens" In only a more reverent and affectionate spirit, and surely with a justice still more apparent, we may say of Christianity, that while it transformed the savage and sensual life of the empire, while it mastered the barbarians who broke upon that in successive terrific inundations of destruction, while it has changed the face of Europe, building cathedrals, hospitals, universities, and has covered America with at least the foundations and lower stories of its appropriate civilization, while it has made the enlightened and aspiring Christendom of to-day the fact of chief importance thus far in the progress of mankind—its true glory is that it has wiped the tears of sorrow from the eyes of its disciples, and has comforted hearts which were desolate with grief, that it has given celestial visions to those who dwelt beneath thatched roofs, and has taught a happier humility to the proud, that it has shed victorious tranquillity on those who have seen the shadows of death closing around them, and has caused to be written over their graves the lofty words of promise and cheer, "I am the Resurrection and the Life"

This is the diadem of this religion sparkling with gems, lucid and vivid, such as never were set in any philosophic or poetic crown Because of these effects, and not merely for its influences upon cosmical progress, men have loved this religion with a passionate intensity beside which all other enthusiasms were weak Because of these, if for nothing else, it will live in the world till human hearts have ceased to beat,

But leaving this, and looking only at what I have been able imperfectly to treat, I certainly am not timid in asking, What is the fair inference from it all? Have not the facts already outlined been sufficient, at least, to justify the thought with which I commenced that enough is apparent in this track of inquiry to warrant, to demand, from every one, the most careful and earnest study of Christianity in its characteristic and vital contents, as probably from God? enough to impel us, when we are thus assumed

of its nature, to make a personal experiment of it, according to its law?

I do not wish to exaggerate anything, but it seems to me indisputably clear that so much, at any rate, has been attained, and that while Christianity cannot be scientifically demonstrated, it is most surely indicated, by these unique historical effects, as having had its lofty origin, not on earth, but in the mind which had ordained and which perfectly knew the soul in man, and which could not be unmindful of the wants of that soul, or of the attainments which are possible to it. The fountain cannot rise higher than the spring. The vast, shining, perpetual up-sprung of these immense and world-wide effects—it seems to me absolutely incredible that the source of it all was in a sensitive Jewish brain in the workshop of Joseph, and in an unbroken garden-grave.

At this point, then, observe still further some other things connected in history with this religion,—especially this how suddenly it broke forth upon a race which was not in the least expecting its coming, which seemed almost as far as possible from being prepared to accept and absorb it with intelligent faith, yet in which certain preparations had been made, apparently for its introduction to mankind, which at least distinctly agree with the thought that a vigilance overhead was concerned in its coming, and that a plan not of human device was in that fulfilled.

The ethnic religions were never able to build up in man a life harmonious with even the higher philosophical precepts. They could not give—did not seek to give—a consciousness of sweet and purifying communion with a holy Creator, whose love was immortal as His power. The burden of sin they could not lift, from any troubled and travailing soul, by authentic promises of forgiveness. The transformation of the spirit in man from pride or fear into the humble yet joyful tranquillity of self-consecrating affection toward an invisible King in his beauty, was something outside their range of effort. But we may not

overlook, or momentarily depreciate, any virtue of thought or aim manifest in them. It only shows how much more was needed than they could furnish, to rectify man's spiritual life. It only adds, for a discerning disciple, to the glory of him in whom such scattered preceding intimations appear sublimely completed and surpassed. If God at last did send a religion, appropriate to Himself, for all mankind, for all coming ages, these bursts of aspiration, these uncertain yet elevating apprehensions of verity, these evanescent foreshadowings, only show how long and how widely He wrought—though in a silence like that which attends the motion of stars—preparing the way for the final discovery of it.

But another thing carefully to be noted is this: that however numerous, or however signal, such pre-Christian or extra-Christian indications may have been of what at last becomes manifest in the Gospel, the new religion did not come by natural development from any one preceding, or from all of them combined. It was not the result of a shrewd eclecticism, which sought to blend certain elements of each in a wider scheme of reconciliation. Still less was it a class syncretism, equally ready to authorize all, making no essential distinctions between them. Efforts of this sort were abundantly made at a later time in the Gnostic development, and what came of them, he who runs may read. But whatever else it is, or is not, Christianity, as apparent throughout the New Testament, is at least, to the most cursory observation, a system peculiar and self-contained with its own affirmations of alleged Divine and invisible facts, and its special maxims of duty and truth founded upon them, with an interior law and life of self-development as absolutely belonging to itself as those of tree, animal, man, belong to the organisms in which they are expressed. No one has established an effort in it to borrow from other religious schemes.

